PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

SIXTH SERIES—VOLUME 429 (Part 2)

HOUSE OF COMMONS

OFFICIAL REPORT

FOURTH SESSION OF THE FIFTY-THIRD PARLIAMENT
OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN
AND NORTHERN IRELAND
FIFTY-THIRD YEAR OF THE REIGN OF
HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II

SESSION 2004–05

COMPRISING PERIOD
10 January—20 January 2005

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10 January 2005

Written Ministerial Statements

Monday 10 January 2005

TREASURY

Child Benefit

The Paymaster General (Dawn Primarolo): The Child Benefit Bill, introduced to Parliament on 13 December, will enable the Treasury to lay regulations prescribing the conditions under which young people aged 16 and over qualify for child benefit. Draft regulations and a supplementary regulatory impact assessment are published today, to indicate how the Treasury intends to use the powers provided by the Bill. Copies are available from the Vote Office, the Library of the House and the HM Treasury website.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Mental Capacity Bill

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs (Mr. David Lammy): In response to a recommendation by the Pre-Legislative Scrutiny Committee, the Government placed a draft code of practice, accompanying the Mental Capacity Bill, in the Libraries of both Houses on 8 September 2004. Members of the Commons Standing Committee (19 October to 4 November) referred extensively to the code during discussions. Members commented that they found the code very helpful in giving them details on how the Bill would work in the real world. Many Members spoke of the importance of the code for successful implementation and they appreciated the fact that the draft code had been prepared at such an early stage. The Government are very grateful for the constructive nature of the comments that have been made about the code.

The draft code is a living document. It will change as a result of discussions on it so far, and will change further during its passage through the House of Lords. It will then be subject to a full public consultation. Given the importance of the code, the Government have decided to produce a short summary of the revisions we expect to make to it. This includes changes that will need to be made as a result of amendments to the Bill, as well as suggestions Members made about the code itself during the Commons Committee stage. We have also been continuing our dialogue with stakeholders and they too have suggested some helpful changes. We hope this summary will help to inform Lords' debates on the code by giving them the most up-to-date picture possible of what we expect the final version of the code to look like, before it is issued for full public consultation.

Chapter 3: Capacity to Make a Decision

The code already contains details on communicating with someone using simple language,visual aids and other communication aids. The Government are making an amendment to the Bill that will set out the steps someone should take to communicate with someone who hasdifficulties in communicating. Therefore we will slightly amend this section of the code torefer to the relevant clause in the Bill.

Chapter 4: Best Interests

Chapter 4 of the draft code discusses the best interests principle. The code explains how the Bill's best interests checklist should be used by decision-makers to decide where the best interests of the person lacking capacity lie. Given the importance of this principle, we have decided to expand on it. In particular, we will amend it to make the objective nature of best interests even clearer. We will emphasise the importance of considering all relevant facts and circumstances when assessing what would objectively be in a person's best interests.

We will include further clarification on the legal status of advance statements requesting (rather than refusing) treatment. This was an issue discussed at Committee. Advance statements requesting treatment are an expression of a person's wishes and feelings and as such are already implicitly included in the Bill and the best interests checklist. But we have agreed to clarify the position on advance requests for treatment in the code of practice.

If a person has taken the trouble to write down an advance statement of their future wishes, then any treating clinician would have a duty to consider these wishes and feelings as part of the best interests determination. The more specific and well-thought out the statement, the more likely that a clinician will find the statement persuasive within the best interests assessment. We will make this clear in the code.

Committee members raised concerns about discrimination against the elderly and people with disabilities. If able-bodied people think generally that life for the disabled and for elderly people is less good, this could have an impact on decisions made about these people or the care that they receive. We will therefore amend the code to emphasise that it can never be in a person's best interests to be discriminated against or given less favourable treatment on the basis of age or disability. The code will point out that the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 provides that hospitals, care homes and social services must take reasonable steps to provide people with disabilities with the same standard of service, on the same terms, as all other members of the public. We will also explain that since best interests is an objective test, any subjective views that an individual might hold generally about the quality of life of people with disabilities or the elderly will not be relevant as a part of the assessment.

In Committee, members raised concerns that the Bill does not make provision for an act done to someone who lacks capacity that is intended to provide a medical benefit to a third party. We will clearly state in the code what is permissible under the Bill. This would confirm current common law that, in some cases, best interests would permit testing or treatment for the benefit of third parties, where it meets the wider interpretation of best interests. The code will give specific advice to guide professionals or the Court of Protection on cases where testing or treatment for the benefit of third parties is at issue. It will clarify which cases should always be considered by the Court of Protection.

We will also include in the best interests section more information on communication support for those lacking capacity who have difficulties in communicating their wishes. We will make it clearer that all reasonably practicable steps should be taken to help the person communicate his present wishes and feelings.

Chapter 5: Acts in Connection with Care or Treatment

The code deals with the duty of donees of lasting power of attorney and court-appointed deputies to give accounts, when looking after the finances of someone who lacks capacity. However, when it talks about carers without formal powers paying for goods and services, it does not mention that they should also keep receipts and proofs of payment. We will add this useful piece of advice for carers to the code.

Chapter 6: Lasting Powers of Attorney

We welcomed a helpful suggestion that the code could suggest to someone making a financial lasting power of attorney, that they could stipulate that someone else should check the attorney's accounts periodically. We will include this suggestion in the code.

People will also be able to state in a financial lasting power of attorney instrument that it should only be used when the donor has lost capacity. (Welfare attorneys can only make decisions when someone has lost capacity.) People asked how anyone would know that the donor did in fact lack capacity. We will therefore amend the code to explain that it is the donor's responsibility to explain exactly what he means by this to ensure that any such conditions are workable. For example, the donor could say that the lasting power of attorney should only come into effect when his GP has confirmed his lack of capacity to manage his own property and affairs, in writing.

The code contains many examples that help to show how the Bill will operate in real-life situations. One example deals with the ability of donees of lasting power of attorney to make gifts on the donor's behalf, and illustrates this with a donee using the donor's money to pay his grandson's school fees. This is misleading, since school fees might not come within the scope of gifts. We will amend this example.

We will add a further example to clarify an area that people have found difficult. That is, when someone with a financial lasting power of attorney continues to carry out some financial transactions for himself, because he is capable of doing certain things at certain times, but also needs his attorney to do some things for him. The example will make clear that people, such as bank staff, should be prepared to allow both the donor and the donee to carry out transactions.

Chapters 6 and 7: Attorneys and Deputies

We received a useful suggestion about the need for clients of the Office of the Public Guardian to ensure the information held on the registers of lasting powers of attorney and deputies is up-to-date. Both the code and guidance issued by the Office of the Public Guardian will state that people should notify the office of any change of name or address of donors donees, deputies and the people for whom they act. In the case of the lasting power of attorney register, this will be the duty of the donor, for as long as he has capacity to do so, but responsibility will fall to the donee if the donor is not able to do so. This will help to ensure that the registers remain up-to-date.

Chapter 8: Advance Decisions

The Joint Committee on Human Rights asked why there was no requirement in the Bill for advance decisions to be made in writing. The code of practice will be amended to ensure that it is in line with any changes made to the Bill requiring valid advance decisions to be in writing and witnessed. The code will stress the importance of making the contents of advance decisions as clear and watertight as possible. It will recommend that advance decisions should be made after consultation with a health professional.

The Committee also asked whether someone would need to specify in an advance decision that they did not wish to receive artificial nutrition and hydration (ANH). The code will make it clear that ANH is regarded as treatment. People will need to specify what treatment they are refusing and then specify, in addition, if they wish the refusal to apply even where that treatment is necessary to sustain life. The code will emphasise that those making advance decisions would be advised to discuss it with a health professional who could explain their treatment options.

Chapter 9: Protection and Supervision

Chapter nine of the code gives information on detecting and preventing abuse of those who lack capacity. We have accepted the suggestion that the definition of abuse in the code could be extended to include threats to restrain someone's liberty. It is important that the code lets people know that there are many types of abuse and that verbal threats and intimidation may constitute psychological abuse, and we will therefore expand the code's section on this subject.

Chapter 11: The Independent Consultee Service

The Government tabled a number of amendments to clauses 34 to 39 on the independent consultee (IC) service. The House of Commons Standing Committee accepted these changes and we will therefore need to amend the code accordingly.

We have amended the role of the IC in the Bill from simply advising the decision-maker on the best interests of the person who lacks capacity to more clearly representing the person's wishes and feelings as well. The code will clarify that the role of the IC will be both to represent the person who lacks capacity, where this is possible, and to give the decision-maker advice and information to enable the decision-maker to reach a decision about what would be in the best interests of the person who lacks capacity. In particular their role will be to give input on the person's wishes, feelings, beliefs, values and other factors.

The revised Bill stipulates that the requirement to consult an IC, where there is a decision to move someone lacking capacity into a care home, is triggered when the stay is likely to be for longer than eight weeks. This applies regardless of whether the accommodation is provided or arranged by a local authority or the NHS. (Where an NHS body provides for accommodation in a hospital the relevant period will remain 28 days). The code will reflect this.

The code will also reflect an amendment that ensures an IC is involved in relation to people whose residence is initially intended to be less than 28 days/eight weeks if the period is later extended beyond the applicable period.

We have amended the Bill to make clear that ICs do not need to be consulted when the patient is to be detained in hospital (or otherwise required to live in the accommodation in question) under the Mental Health Act 1983. Nor will they need to be consulted about treatment which is regulated by that Act. The code will point to this exclusion.

We will amend the code to add the IC to the list of people for whom the code is produced and who have a duty to have regard to it.

Chapter 12: Research

The chapter on research will be amended to include information on changes to research governance and the role of the central office for research ethics committees from 2005.

The code will clarify that if a deputy had no relationship with, or knowledge of, the person who lacks capacity before his appointment as deputy, then he or she should not be the person consulted about the participation of the person lacking capacity in research. We will amend the reference to the researcher's right to appeal if a carer or nominated person has advised against involving the person who lacks capacity in the research. We will clarify that the carer or nominated person has the final say. We will also clarify what is meant by terms such as negligible risk and not unduly invasive.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Teachers' TV Board of Governors

The Secretary of State for Education and Skills (Ruth Kelly): I wish to announce the establishment of the Teachers' TV Board of Governors as an advisory non-departmental public body (ANDPB).

Teachers' TV is a new digital TV channel aimed at people who work in schools. Funded by, but editorially independent of, the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), the channel will offer direct access to resources, information and training to support head teachers, teachers, governors, teaching assistants and other school staff to deliver education to the highest possible standard.

A third party, education digital, will run the channel on behalf of DfES. They will have direct responsibility for commissioning programming, scheduling and transmission—in short, all aspects of the channel's daily operations.

In order to ensure the channel is independent of Government, as required by the 2003 Communications Act, yet remains accountable for the public money it receives, a governance structure has been developed. This structure will be overseen by the Teachers' TV Board of Governors who will be responsible for ensuring DfES's educational outcomes are effectively translated into targets for Teachers' TV programming. The supplier's performance-related bonus will be dependent on them successfully meeting these targets.

The Board of Governors has been established as an advisory non-departmental public body and it will act as a high-powered advisory authority that will inform DfES decisions regarding Teachers' TV. The board will produce an annual report for presentation to the Department which will also be published. It will outline the advice that the board has given DfES over the course of the year, the targets the supplier was set, the board's assessment of the supplier's performance over the previous year and the bonus that was recommended to the Department. Other matters, at the board's discretion, may also be covered in the report—for example the effectiveness of the regulatory framework in upholding the channel's editorial independence.

Teachers' TV will launch in February 2005 and will be on-air 24 hours per day via a number of distribution outlets including digital satellite, digital cable and digital terrestrial TV. An associated Teachers' TV website will provide a broadband version of programmes and downloadable resources, an interactive TV facility will be developed by autumn 2005.

I believe the work of the Teachers' TV Board of Governors will be invaluable in ensuring Teachers' TV delivers the maximum benefit to people who work in schools through supporting them to get the best out of themselves and their pupils.

HEALTH

NHS Foundation Trusts

The Minister of State, Department of Health (Mr. John Hutton): The chairman of Monitor (whose statutory name is the independent regulator of NHS foundation trusts) announced on 4 January 2005 that, in accordance with section six of the Health and Social Care (Community Health and Standards) Act 2003, Monitor authorised the following NHS trusts as NHS foundation trusts from 1 January 2005, as part of its first group in wave 1A:

Barnsley District General Hospitals NHS Trust

Chesterfield and North Derbyshire Royal Hospitals NHS Trust

Harrogate Healthcare NHS Trust

South Tyneside Healthcare NHS Trust

Monitor also authorised Gateshead health NHS trust as an NHS foundation trust from 5 January 2005.

Monitor has deferred consideration of the applications from two trusts:

Southend Hospital NHS Trust

West Suffolk Hospitals NHS Trust

Further decisions on both trusts may be made at a later date by Monitor.

Two applicants withdrew their applications in order to undertake further preparation and with the intention of re-applying at a later stage:

Nottingham City Hospitals NHS Trust

Burton Hospitals NHS Trust

A copy of Monitor's press notice was placed in the Library.

Monitor's announcement brings the total number of NHS foundation trusts to 25. Monitor is considering a second group of 10 applicants in wave 1A for authorisation from 1 April 2005.

NHS Dentistry Reforms

The Secretary of State for Health (Dr. John Reid): In my statement on 16 July 2004, *Official Report*, columns 89–91WS, I set out our plans for rebuilding national health service dentistry to ensure better access to NHS dental care and to improve oral health in England. There have been major developments since then and we have been taking stock of the timetable for further stages of the changes.

In the last six months there have been significant developments on a number of fronts.

In my earlier statement I reported that there were already 1,500 dentists in more than 750 practices working under personal dental services (PDS) pilots. The interest among dentists in moving to these new ways of working has been very considerable. I am now able to report that we have some 3,500 dentists in 1,300 dental practices working under PDS arrangements. Furthermore there are some 500 practices with applications in the pipeline. When those applications have been approved there will be some 20 per cent. of practices in PDS and the number of dentists seeking to move to the new arrangements is growing daily.

In November we received a report from the National Audit Office in which they acknowledged that

> "there is a strong rationale for reforming NHS dentistry".

However, they also identified risks to the successful implementation of our reforms. The NAO were particularly concerned that primary care trusts should have time to acquire the necessary skills and resources before the full commissioning of NHS dentistry was delegated to them. We are preparing guidance and additional support for PCTs. Nevertheless we recognise that this is a major new responsibility and PCTs need to be well prepared for it.

We have made very good progress towards recruiting 1,000 whole time equivalent dentists to address access issues. The first batch of dentists from Poland have arrived in England and, following induction, will be starting work during January in the south-west, Cumbria and West Midland. Further tranches of Polish dentists will be starting at regular intervals between now and October. We have also begun recruitment activity in other European countries, including Spain and Germany. On the domestic front the NHS locally has been recruiting dentists and the "Keeping in Touch" scheme has supported dentists back to practice after a career break.

We have addressed the backlog of people waiting to take the international qualifying exam which enables dentists from non-EU countries to practise in England. The numbers of candidates passing this Exam in 2004 was 199 compared with 81 in 2003. The Department of Health in conjunction with the General Dental Council and the Royal College of Surgeons (Edinburgh) has arranged a sitting of IQE Part A in India at the end of February for dentists who wish to work in England.

The National Institute for Clinical Excellence issued guidance in October 2004 on recall intervals. It recommended that patients should be recalled on the basis of clinical need with intervals varying from 3–18 months. These intervals will move away from the current practice of many dentists who recall patients every six months.

The system reform which we will be undertaking is a complex one where we have to ensure that the component parts interconnect effectively. As the NAO report indicated we have to manage the risks associated with these changes and ensure that their implementation is fully effective. We have been making rapid progress and considering when would be the optimum time to make further changes. We have decided to continue implementing some of the changes currently underway. It is important that dentists who want to move to PDS status should be able to do so as quickly as possible. Dentists also need to be able to take account of the NICE guidance in their day-to-day practice. The dental practice board and dental software suppliers also need time to make the necessary changes to information technology systems. Major changes, such as that to patient charges, need to go out for public consultation and be subject to debate in Parliament. In that context, we are considering the recommendations of the NHS dentistry patient charges working group. We also need to take account of the NAO's constructive recommendations about managing risk. For example, strategic health authorities are performance managing primary care trusts in terms of our key objectives—buying-back, additional NHS capacity from existing dentists, encouraging further transfers to PDS and matching new recruits (including international ones) to vacancies in the hardest pressed areas. Through this process we can ensure that the changes which are introduced are in the best interests of patients, dentists and the NHS.

For all these reasons, we believe more time is needed to ensure complete system reform and have therefore decided that full implementation will now take place by April 2006. A longer lead-in time will allow many more dentists to move to new ways of working in the meantime, will enable public consultation on key aspects and the parliamentary process to be fully observed and will allow primary care trusts to prepare their new roles.

I can also confirm intention to publish for consultation the new regulations for local commissioning of primary dental services and dental charging in the summer of 2005.

The changes which we have been making to NHS dentistry are proving to be very successful as evidenced by the high level of interest among dentists in moving to new ways of working.

Written Ministerial Statements

Tuesday 11 January 2005

DEFENCE

Reserve Forces

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Ivor Caplin): I am announcing today that a new order has been made under section 54 of the Reserve Forces Act 1996 so that reservists may continue to be called into service to support operations in Iraq. The new order is effective until 6 January 2006. This replaces the order which expired earlier this month.

During the course of last year some 2,350 reservists were called out and accepted into service to support operations in Iraq. Details of the next tranche of reservists to be called out were announced to the House on 14 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 121WS. Some 900 army reservists are involved and they will be deployed to theatre from April, where the majority will complete six month tours. We are very appreciative of the continuing support and commitment shown by both reservists, their employers and their families.

Gurkha Service (Review)

The Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Geoffrey Hoon): As the House will be aware, our policy is to keep the Brigade of Gurkhas' terms and conditions of service under review, to ensure that they are fair and that any differences from the wider Army are reasonable and justifiable. We are also aware of our historic relationship and understandings with the Governments of Nepal and India, which have enabled Gurkhas to serve in the British Army since 1947.

Gurkha soldiers have spent an increasing proportion of their time in UK since withdrawal from Hong Kong in 1997, and successive amendments to the conditions under which they serve have recognised their changing role, status and personal aspirations. The most recent of these was their inclusion in the new HM forces immigration rule, which took effect from 25 October 2004. This has potentially far-reaching effects on the way we recruit and manage the brigade and care for its serving members, families and veterans. In addition, some public criticism and unease continues about the remaining differences between Gurkhas' terms and conditions and those of the wider Army. We are, therefore, anxious to ensure that such differences are absolutely justifiable as well as fully understood and accepted by our Gurkha soldiers and want to ensure that the MOD's position, both legally and morally, is beyond reproach.

I have therefore directed that the MOD should carry out a wide-ranging review of all Gurkha terms and conditions of service. This will be an extensive piece of work and we will endeavour to take account of the views of all those with a legitimate interest. This new review will build on earlier findings, including work to date on the review of Gurkha married accompanied service (MAS), but its scope will be much wider and it is aiming to complete in late autumn 2005.

I am aware that the outcome of the Gurkha MAS review has been keenly anticipated by the Gurkhas themselves and by those concerned about Gurkha welfare. I regret that this work is not yet finally completed but I expect to receive an interim report on the new study, which will enable me to make an announcement on Gurkha MAS, in early summer 2005.

HEALTH

Mental Health (Race Equality)

The Minister of State, Department of Health (Ms Rosie Winterton): Today we are publishing "Delivering Race Equality in Mental Health Care: An Action Plan for Reform Inside and Outside Services" (DRE), combined in a single document with the Government's response to the independent inquiry into the death of David Bennett.

It draws on three key recent publications:

(a) "Inside Outside: Improving Mental Health Services for Black and Minority Ethnic Communities in England" (published on 10 March 2003);

(b) "Delivering Race Equality: A Framework for Action" (published for consultation on 17 October 2003); and

(c) the independent inquiry into the death of David Bennett (published on 12 February 2004).

David Bennett was a 38 year old African-Caribbean patient, who died in October 1998 in a medium secure psychiatric unit after being restrained by staff. The document published today contains the Government's formal response to all the recommendations made in the report of the inquiry into his death. The responses are overwhelmingly positive and, taken together with DRE, comprise a coherent programme of work for achieving equality of access, experience and outcomes for Black and minority ethnic mental health service users.

The programme is based on three "building blocks", first proposed in the consultation version of DRE: more appropriate and responsive services, including the development of a more culturally capable workforce; community engagement, supported by 500 new community development workers; and better information, including a new annual census of mental health patients.

DRE also needs to be set in the context of our wider programme of work tackling inequalities in health and social care. For example, in February 2004 the chief executive of the NHS, Sir Nigel Crisp, launched a ten-point race equality action plan that challenges all NHS leaders to address race equality and the needs of Black and minority ethnic communities in a systematic and professional way. In October 2004 we appointed the first equality and human rights director for the NHS, Surinder Sharma, and one of his priorities will be to promote Sir Nigel's plan.

Racism or discrimination in any form have no place in modern society, and no place in modern health or social care. David Bennett's death will remain a tragic reminder of what can happen if services fail to meet the needs of black and minority ethnic communities and individuals. With this document we offer a clear way forward to equity for all in mental health care.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Allergy Services

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health (Dr. Stephen Ladyman): The Government's response to the Health Committee's Sixth Report of Session 2003–04 on the provision of allergy services, Cm 6433, has been published today. Copies have been placed in the Library.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Bichard Inquiry

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Charles Clarke): I have today placed in the Library of the House copies of the Government's progress report on implementing the recommendations of Sir Michael Bichard's inquiry into issues surrounding the Soham murders. All 31 recommendations were accepted by the Government when the inquiry reported in June 2004 and we remain fully committed to delivering the necessary programme of change. In June, Sir Michael made clear his intention to reconvene his inquiry and review progress six months after publishing his findings, and in November he formally requested a report to assist him in doing so. This was sent to him on 22 December.

The progress report is made on behalf of the Government and the range of stakeholders who have contributed to implementation. It indicates that significant progress has been made in taking forward the recommendations, which fall into four main areas: the development of a national IT infrastructure to support the handling of police intelligence and other information; the introduction of a statutory code of practice on police information management; improved measures to protect children and vulnerable adults, including a registration scheme for those wishing to work with these groups; and a range of enhancements to existing vetting processes.

The report sets out what has been achieved in each of these areas, together with plans and milestones for future action. Key areas of delivery are:

> The introduction of a national IT system for police information sharing. The IMPACT programme (information management, prioritisation, analysis, co-ordination and tasking) has been established to provide a national information-sharing system and to modernise the central information services available through the police national computer. New information sharing tools will start becoming available to police forces and the Criminal Records Bureau through the police local cross-check system (PLX) from early 2005, and there will be a progressive strengthening of capabilities until completion of the IMPACT programme in 2007;
>
> The production of a statutory code of practice on information management, for the police service. A draft code has already been produced and issued for consultation. It is annexed to the progress report and is due to come into force by May 2005. It will be supported by detailed operational guidance to forces and will help to ensure that decisions about reviewing, retaining, deleting and sharing information are taken on a consistent basis;
>
> The development of a registration scheme covering persons considered unsuitable to work with children and vulnerable adults. This is underway and will build on the existing barring lists in providing a comprehensive, centralised, integrated system to prevent unsuitable people from gaining access to vulnerable groups through paid or voluntary work. Final decisions on the detail of the scheme will follow a feasibility study which will report early in 2005;
>
> The enhancement of staff recruitment procedures in education to reflect best practice in safeguarding children. New guidance for schools is under development and an initial on-line training programme will be introduced by spring 2005;
>
> Advice to all social services authorities emphasising the importance of effective information sharing with the police in relation to actual or alleged offences against children has already been issued. In addition, comprehensive new guidance will be developed by December 2005 as part of the wider guidance on local safeguarding children boards;
>
> Significant development and improvements to existing vetting procedures. A quality assurance framework to assist forces in carrying out their roles in the vetting process has been successfully trialled and will be rolled out to all police forces by October 2005.

All these strands of work are being taken forward within a programme structure based on effective joined-up working across the Government Departments and delivery agencies involved. Training arrangements are being put in place to support implementation, together with targeted inspection and performance measurement regimes to ensure compliance with new and improved systems.

It is vital to ensure the same level of protection for all children and other vulnerable people, wherever they are in the United Kingdom. The Scottish Executive, the National Assembly for Wales and the Northern Ireland Office have therefore been closely involved in this programme of work. For some of the recommendations, the route to implementation will differ between jurisdictions, but the objective of effective, integrated systems is the same. The arrangements in different jurisdictions are set out in more detail in the report.

The Government remain totally committed to full implementation of Sir Michael Bichard's recommendations and to ensuring that the necessary resources are available to support the process.

Future Status of the Forensic Science Service (FSS)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Caroline Flint): On 17 July 2003, the then Home Secretary announced that the Government have accepted the recommendation of the independent review of the Forensic Science Service (FSS) that it should be transformed from a trading fund into a Government-owned company (GovCo) prior to development as a Public Private Partnership (PPP).

Since then, officials have worked closely with the FSS, the police, as the organisation's main customers, and treasury officials to ensure that we are clear about how the transformation of the FSS can best be managed.

We now have a clearer and more detailed analysis of the business and its prospects, together with its strengths and weaknesses. This confirms the conclusion of the independent review that the trading fund model would not allow the FSS to deliver to its full potential, or indeed to remain at the leading edge of forensic science in the UK and internationally, thus wasting an important asset in our drive to improve detections and reduce the fear of crime.

In particular, the analysis has confirmed that the market for forensic science is changing rapidly in the face of increased competition. The pace of change is accelerating as technology develops and in response to action by police forces and police authorities to achieve strategic market management in line with public procurement best practices.

To ensure that the FSS has the commercial agility and the appropriate governance structure needed to respond to this increasingly dynamic market, the Government have decided to transform the FSS into a wholly owned Government company.

This will be a transitional structure. In the light of FSS performance as a GovCo the Government will consider what next steps are necessary to facilitate the growth of the business, ensure the future of the FSS, maintain its position at the forefront of forensic science, and maximise its contribution to reducing crime and the fear of crime.

The future form and direction of the FSS will stem from a balance between the realisable value to Government, the benefits to the business of private sector participation, changes in the forensic science market and the potential future need to access private capital.

The timing of the next stage will depend upon reaching agreement with key stakeholders that conditions are favourable and the move would be advantageous to the business. We will also use the interim period to fully test the merits of the FSS as a Government owned company in its own right.

We recognise the uncertainty for FSS employees, suppliers and customers that a process of this kind entails. The Home Office and the FSS management are working together to ensure that all staff and stakeholders are kept fully informed of the process.

I am aware that many Members whose constituents work for the FSS have made representations about the transformation, but we must ensure that the FSS is able to respond to the changing face of the market and the demands of its customers, and to seize the opportunities presented by emerging technologies, while retaining its public sector mission.

In following this process through we will continue to keep all stakeholders informed.

TRANSPORT

Office of Rail Regulation

The Minister of State, Department for Transport (Mr. Tony McNulty): The board of the Office of Rail Regulation (ORR) has begun considering the organisational structure of the office when, subject to parliamentary approval of the Railways Bill, ORR becomes both safety and economic regulator for the national rail network and those staff working on rail safety issues at the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) transfer to ORR. The board have set out their initial thoughts in a letter of 1 December 2004 to the Secretary of State. I have placed a copy of that letter in the House Library and sent copies direct to Members of the Standing Committee A which is considering the Railways Bill.

Fixed Penalties

The Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr. Alistair Darling):

1. On 1 September, I published a discussion note inviting comments on a possible structure of graduated fixed penalties for speeding offences, in place of the present flat rate fixed penalty of three penalty points and a £60 fine, regardless of the degree of speeding. This statement reports on the responses which my Department has received.

2. The Road Safety Bill currently before Parliament includes enabling powers under which the Government, following consultation with representative organisations, may introduce graduated fixed penalties through statutory orders, and subject also to affirmative resolution and debate in the House as regards the proposed penalty points.

3. The Bill will thus enable the Government—subject to parliamentary approval for the necessary statutory order—to discharge the commitments we have given, both to create an aggravated offence to deal with excessive speeding, and to provide for graduated penalties to include a lower fixed penalty of two points for lesser breaches of speed limits. And in this way we will help ensure that the punishments for speeding will better reflect the severity of the crime and be seen to do so.

4. There will be no change in the present automatic disqualification for 12 or more points for speeding or other offences, as provided for in Section 35 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 as amended.

5. The 1 September discussion note expressly did not anticipate or prejudge future statutory consultation on proposals. The objective of the invitation to comment was to give me an early and informal indication of public views on how more graduated penalties might be structured.

6. There were 380 responses to the discussion note, as follows:

Individuals	276
Motoring organisations	10
Road safety organisations	13
Safety camera partnerships (comprising local highway authorities, police forces and magistrates courts' committees)	25
The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO); individual police forces	6
Local authority organisations; individual authorities	41
Magistrates courts groups	7
Other organisations	2
Total	380

A list of respondees has been placed in the Library of the House.

7. 85 of the individual responses were from people who wrote endorsing the submission made by "Safe Speed", an organisation which campaigns on speed and

road safety matters. The AA Foundation noted that its submission took account of a sample of 516 of its members.

8. The discussion note invited comment on five questions in particular.

Question 1—Do you support the principle of more graduated penalties?

9. 197 respondents supported the principle of a more graduated structure, including the RAC Foundation and AA Foundation, which supported both higher and lower graduation. The Association of Chief Police Officers, the Association of British Insurers and some road safety organisations, including PACTS (The Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety) and RoSPA (The Royal Society for Prevention of Accidents) also supported the principle of graduation, but on the basis that there should be only higher penalties than the present three points.

10. 173 respondents did not support the principle, including "Safe Speed" and the 85 individual respondents who endorsed its response.

Question 2—If you do not agree with a graduated system, do you favour another alternative to the present system ?

11. 218 respondents expressed no view. Some 98 respondents agreed with the present system. The main alternative proposal was that from "Safe Speed" and the individuals who endorsed it—essentially that speed enforcement should be carried out on a case by case basis and not on the basis of a tariff of penalties.

Question 3—Invited views on a possible structure of graduated penalties

12. The discussion note invited comment on this possible structure of penalties:

	Lower penalty—2 points and £40 fine	*Standard penalty—3 points and £60 fine*	*Higher penalty—6 points and £100 fine*
Speed (mph)	Speed up to and including (mph)	Speed (mph)	Speed at or above (mph)
20	No lower penalty for speeding in 20 mph zone	Up to and including 31 mph	32
30	39	40–44	45
40	50	51–56	57
50	61	62–69	70
60	72	73–81	82
70	83	84–93	94

13. The key points from responses were that:

78 respondents expressed no view on the possible structure.

25 respondents supported the structure—including the AA Foundation, in whose survey of 516 motorists 76 per cent. supported lower two point penalties, and 71 per cent. supported six points for high speeding. The RAC Foundation also supported the possible structure in general, but suggested further consideration of a lower figure than the suggested 40 mph for the start of the three point penalty on 30 mph roads, but also a slightly higher threshold for the start of the three point penalty for 70 mph roads.

"Safe Speed" and the respondents who endorsed their submission were opposed in principle to graduated penalties, because they did not agree that the degree of danger was related to the degree of excess speed. But if there were to be a graduated system, "Safe Speed" argued that the thresholds for higher penalties should be generally higher than the in the suggested possible structure;

178 respondents were not in favour of the suggested two point penalty, including the road safety organisations, on the basis of the risks of injury from speeding, and the risk that a lower penalty communicated a "mixed message" about speeding.

Question 4—Should penalties be higher for repeat offenders?

14. 189 respondents supported higher penalties of repeat offenders, including the road safety groups. 56 were against—including the AA Foundation and the RAC Foundation. Some 103 respondents expressed no view. Some 27 offered a number of suggestions such as increasing fines by £10 for each 1 mph over the speed limit.

Question 5— Should other factors such as location at a school be taken into account in a penalty regime?

15. 206 respondents felt that other factors should be taken into account, though many noted the practical difficulties of building "other factors" into a structure of fixed penalties. Some 68 did not favour allowing for special factors. Some 101 expressed no view.

16. I am grateful for these responses, which I have considered carefully.

17. A majority of responses supported the principle of a more graduated structure of speeding penalties, which the Road Safety Bill will enable.

18. The responses also showed general agreement that the enabling powers should allow for a structure of penalties to include higher fixed penalties for repeat offences, or for offences involving special factors such as those outside a school. The Bill provides that graduated fixed penalties can include provisions on either point.

19. As to the detailed form that a new structure of penalties should take, the responses to the discussion note showed that there is a range of views, with support both for and against a lower as well as a higher penalty.

20. But bearing in mind the role which the House will play in considering and determining future penalties, I believe that the Bill should provide for the possibility of a lower penalty in the appropriate circumstances.

21. If the Bill is passed, the Government will at the earliest opportunity develop and consult with representative organisations on specific proposals for a graduated structure of fixed penalties, which will then be for consideration by the House. In preparing these proposals, I will carefully consider the views which responses to the discussion note have in the meantime provided.

22. And I shall of course consider also all comments that hon. Members may have on graduated fixed speeding penalties, in discussions on the Bill.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Pensions Advisory Service

The Minister for Pensions (Malcolm Wicks): During the first sitting of the Pensions Bill in Standing Committee B on Tuesday, 9 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 10, I announced that the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) would undertake a review of the funding of the Pensions Advisory Service (commonly known as OPAS). I am now able to announce the outcome of that review.

Whereas OPAS previously received grant in aid through the Occupational Pensions Regulatory Authority (Opra), in future it will receive grant directly from the Department for Work and Pensions. This arrangement will take effect for the financial year 2005–06. Though the pensions regulator (the body that succeeds Opra) will have no delegated accounting officer responsibility for OPAS, OPAS funding will continue to be recouped from the pensions industry through the levy administered by the pensions regulator.

To inform this prospective change, the Department reviewed the customer services OPAS provides. Its conclusion is that OPAS is an excellent example of the value for money and quality of service that can be provided at remarkably low cost by the voluntary sector. Through its telephone helpline, its team of mainly voluntary pension professionals and the media appearances of senior staff on financial advice programmes, OPAS provides, free of charge, a unique source of expert advice on pension matters to the general public. OPAS also performs an important filtering service by resolving large numbers of complaints cases that might otherwise go to the pensions ombudsman. Furthermore, it is uniquely positioned to provide the Department with insights into developing issues in the pensions market that can be of potential policy relevance.

I take this opportunity to thank the Board of OPAS, the permanent staff and the OPAS volunteers for providing these very valuable services.

Under the new arrangements, the Department's intention is to provide OPAS with continuing budgetary security whilst maintaining its integrity as a free and independent source of impartial advice for the general public. Wherever we can, we will assist OPAS to improve upon existing standards of customer service. We will do this through revised stewardship arrangements; by taking a stronger strategic interest in OPAS's strategic objectives and by agreeing a revised management statement and financial memorandum. OPAS and the Department will also draw up a partnership accord setting out our respective expectations of one another.

At the same time, the OPAS board is taking this opportunity to review its own constitution; its strategic objectives and the management style of the office. It is also considering, in conjunction with the Department, whether, by acquiring new information technology and better data collection, it can make an improved contribution to evidence-based pensions policy making.

Opportunities may also exist for further improvements to the value for money and the quality of advice that OPAS gives the general public through the provision by the Department of greater access for OPAS to expert knowledge and help (including basic training) on state pensions and contributory conditions. To further improve advice giving, OPAS is also producing revised staff competency frameworks and drawing on the experience of other organisations that provide helpline advice. Opportunities to strengthen customer service may also be possible through OPAS reaching out to other organisations providing similar services and making partnership arrangements with them.

More information on OPAS can be found at www.opas.org.uk. OPAS operates its national helpline during business hours on 0845 6012923. Calls are charged at the local call rate.

Written Ministerial Statements

Wednesday 12 January 2005

HOME DEPARTMENT

Romania and Bulgaria (European Community Association Agreement)

The Minister for Citizenship and Immigration (Mr. Desmond Browne): Further to the statement of my right hon. Friend, the then Home Secretary, on 18 June about Ken Sutton's report on allegations about the handling of applications under the European Community Association Agreements (ECAA), work has continued on next steps. This work includes putting in place procedures and guidance for the agreement with Romania and Bulgaria, consistent with recommendation 8 of Mr Sutton's Report.

New guidance for handling applications for further and indefinite leave to remain (FLR and ILR) will be published on the Home Office website and consideration of these cases will re-commence shortly. The guidance mirrors that for pre-entry and switching cases which has been in place since 1 September and has been working well.

The guidelines for FLR and ILR applications have been drawn up with input from the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and Inland Revenue (IR), specifically on how to assess financial accounts and other business documents, as recommended by Sutton.

Training will be provided to caseworkers on how to apply the new robust guidance when dealing with these applications. They will also receive thorough training on how to analyse business accounts. This will ensure more rigorous scrutiny of applications.

Self-Defence

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Charles Clarke): Concerns have been raised about the ability of householders to use reasonable force to defend themselves, their families, their homes and their property. The Prime Minister stated on 8 December that the Government appreciate that real public concern exists over these issues, and that they would be reviewed.

Accordingly, the Government have considered, in consultation with the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO), the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP), how best this matter should be addressed.

I have concluded that the current law is sound but needs to be better explained to all concerned, especially for householders.

I very much welcome the new guidance on "Charging Standards for Prosecutors" published by the CPS in November, which I believe demonstrates clearly that the law is on the side of the victim and that householders are entitled to use reasonable force to defend themselves, their families and their property.

Moreover I welcome the determination of ACPO to ensure that the new guidance clarifies the detail of this law for every police officer.

I have come to the conclusion that this guidance and clarification will ensure that the current law is properly understood and implemented; and that therefore no change in the law is required.

The Government in conjunction with the CPS and ACPO will shortly publish and promulgate information which makes it clear to the public that the current law ensures that appropriate steps to protect themselves, their family and their property will always be justified.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Fragile States

The Secretary of State for International Development (Hilary Benn): I have placed in the Libraries of both Houses copies of a new paper entitled "Why we Need to Work More Effectively in Fragile States" published by the Department for International Development (DFID).

Fragile states—where Governments cannot or will not deliver security or basic services to the majority of its people—are one of the biggest challenges to the achievement of the millennium development goals and to global stability and security. Fragile states include countries with weak governance, those affected by conflict and those on the brink of conflict. It is often difficult to ensure that aid is delivered effectively in these countries, and there is a pressing need for the international community to reach agreement on new policies and ways of working to tackle these challenges.

The policy paper sets out how the Government will work in fragile states, by:

reviewing the way we allocate aid;

having more long-term planning and more realistic expectations;

developing better early warning systems;

bringing together the policies of UK Government Departments;

using more regional programming to address the causes of weakness;

increasing aid and making more use of civil society organisations to deliver it;

and making more effort to coordinate with other donors.

The implementation of these approaches will need collaboration across UK Government Departments, and internationally, a partnership with developing country Governments (wherever we can), international agencies and donors, civil society, the private sector and the research community. As a first step, DFID will this week host a senior level forum on development effectiveness in fragile states to secure agreement between major bilateral and multilateral donors on how to provide better aid to fragile states.

Written Ministerial Statements

Thursday 13 January 2005

WORK AND PENSIONS

Departmental Efficiency

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Alan Johnson): The DWP is committed to delivering a transformation programme that will provide ever more tailored services to its customers and increase productivity and efficiency for the taxpayer. Through investment in infrastructure and improvement to IT systems and business processes my Department will meet its efficiency challenge and reduce its workforce by 30,000 by 2008.

On the 29 June, my predecessor, my right hon. Friend the Member for Oxford, East (Andrew Smith) gave an update to the House on the progress of this efficiency challenge, setting out the future size and shape of the Pension Service, *Official Report*, columns 8–9WS.

He announced that:

> Six sites would transfer to Jobcentre Plus—namely Derby, Norwich (Baltic House), Nottingham, Wolverhampton, Stockton and Wrexham.
>
> One site (Burnley) would transfer to the Appeals Service and one (Plymouth) to the Child Support Agency.
>
> Two sites (York and Liverpool) would no longer carry out Pension Service business and would close if all other options for alternative use were exhausted.
>
> Of the remaining 19 sites we would identify a number required to deliver the transformed pension service.

This announcement was followed by a further statement from myself on 16 September, *Official Report*, columns 178–9WS, which outlined the future plans for Jobcentre Plus.

Today I can provide a further update on the progress of the Pension Service sites.

The chief executive designate of the new Tribunals Service, which will be an executive agency of the Department for Constitutional Affairs, has now confirmed that the Burnley site does not fit with their overall business strategy. It will therefore remain within the Pension Service and form part of the future improved pension centre network.

I can also announce that York pension centre will become the administrative centre for the financial assistance scheme, a new unit in my department. Existing staff in York pension centre will have the opportunity to apply for the new jobs created.

After full exploration of alternative uses for Liverpool all options have been exhausted, and the 12 month formal notice period to exit from the site has now begun. The vast majority of Liverpool pension centre staff have already found alternative employment or applied under the early release scheme. We expect the remaining staff to find other jobs without the need for compulsory redundancies.

Work to move pensions work from the remaining sites is progressing well with the transfer of Derby and Plymouth pension centres to Jobcentre Plus and Child Support Agency respectively scheduled for completion in early 2005; pensions work beginning to move from Wolverhampton and Wrexham pension centres this month prior to their transfer to Jobcentre Plus; and detailed plans in place for migration of work away from the remaining three sites in Stockton, Nottingham, and Norwich (Baltic House) prior to their transfer to Jobcentre Plus.

Today I can announce plans for considerable investment to transform the Pension Service to deliver greater efficiencies, improved services for our customers, and more fulfilling jobs for our staff. This investment will be focused on those pension centres in:

Burnley;
Cwmbran;
Dundee;
Leicester;
Motherwell;
Seaham;
Swansea;
Stockport;
Warrington;
International Pension Centre (Newcastle);
National pension forecasting and Teleclaims (Newcastle); and
London Pension Centre (Newcastle).

Using a phased approach we will begin transformation activity now to plan to deliver our first improvements in three of these pension centres, Dundee, London pension centre (Newcastle) and Swansea with live running beginning from August 2005. Our customers using the transformed service will begin to see improvements in the speed of processing their claims to state pension. They will be able to make their claim to state pension in one phone call and at the end of it they will know their entitlement and when they will receive their payments. We will be delivering a faster, simpler and more efficient service—the benefits of which will be felt by all our customers and staff.

Between 2006 and 2008 the transformed service will be rolled out to Burnley, Cwmbran, international pension centre (Newcastle), Leicester, Motherwell, National Pension Forecasting and Teleclaims Centre (Newcastle), Seaham, Stockport and Warrington. In choosing the pension centres from which to deliver our modernised and improved services we have undertaken a thorough analysis of the age, suitability and location of our buildings, the infrastructure, the local labour market and the value of the present running costs. The office network in 2008 will be equitably spread across Great Britain and we are retaining pension centres in England, Scotland and Wales.

Those pension centres not selected as transformation sites—Bath, Birmingham, Blackpool, Dearne Valley, London Pension Centre (Glasgow), National Pension Centre (Newcastle), Norwich (Kingfisher) and Walsall—will continue to conduct Pension Service business over the next few years. They remain essential to the delivery of the high quality services our customers have come to expect whilst we transform the Pension Service. However, we will keep the situation under review and consider any transfer opportunities that arise.

The changes I am announcing today continue to move us towards our vision of the Pension Service of the future: improving customer service and ensuring that as many people as possible receive all the benefits to which they are entitled.

Throughout the changes that we have made so far, we have met our commitment to redeploy people where their current job role has ceased to exist and since July 2004, over a thousand staff have found other opportunities elsewhere in my Department or in other Government Departments. Central to this process has been close working with our trade unions on seeking to avoid compulsory redundancies through redeployment and voluntary measures. We intend that this close working will remain central to our implementation of these latest changes.

Written Ministerial Statements

Monday 17 January 2004

PRIME MINISTER

Council of Europe and Western European Union

The Prime Minister (Mr. Tony Blair): My hon. Friends the Members for Morecambe and Lunesdale (Geraldine Smith) and for Finchley and Golders Green (Dr. Vis) have been appointed as full members for the United Kingdom delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the Assembly of Western European Union.

My hon. Friends the Members for Erith and Thamesmead (John Austin) and for Portsmouth, North (Syd Rapson) have been appointed substitute representatives of the United Kingdom delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the Assembly of Western European Union.

TRANSPORT

Newly Qualified Drivers

The Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. Alistair Darling): During my opening speech on Second Reading of the Road Safety Bill on 11 January 2005, Official Report, column 223, I said,

> "Indeed, one in five accidents involve a driver who has passed their test in the precedingyear".

What I should have said was that as many as one in five new drivers has an accident within the first year of passing the driving test.

Written Ministerial Statements

Tuesday 18 January 2005

CABINET OFFICE

Civil Service (Management Functions) Act

The Minister for the Cabinet Office (Mr. David Miliband): Since the last report to Parliament, *Official Report*, 13 January 2004, column 28WS, the existing delegations/authorisations (other than those relating to the Arbitration, Conciliation and Advisory Service, the Health and Safety Executive, the National Assembly for Wales and the Scottish Assembly, were revoked and replaced by a new civil service-wide delegation/authorisation to reflect machinery of Government changes. Ministers, certain bodies and office holders in charge of Departments[1] were given delegated authority from 1 February 2004 under the Civil Service (Management Functions) Act 1992 to:

(a) prescribe the qualifications (so far as they relate to age, knowledge, ability, professional attainment, aptitude, potential, health and coping with the demands of the job) for the appointment of home civil servants (with the exception of those in the fast stream development programme) in their respective departments or bodies; and

(b) determine in relation to home civil servants in their respective departments or bodies the number and grading of posts (with the exception of those in the senior civil service) and the terms and conditions of employment in so far as they relate to:

(i) classification of staff (with the exception of those in the senior civil service);
(ii) remuneration (with the exception of those in the senior civil service);
(iii) allowances;
(iv) expenses;
(v) holidays, hours of work and attendance;
(vi) part-time and other working arrangements;
(vii) performance and promotion;
(viii) retirement age (with the exception of those in the senior civil service);
(ix) redundancy;
(x) re-deployment of staff within the home civil service.

In some cases, where the Minister for the civil service is statutorily required to give consent to terms and conditions of service for staff appointed by statutory bodies or office holders, it was achieved by waiving that requirement, subject to the condition attached to the delegation/authorisation.

The delegation/authorisation was made subject to the condition that recipients comply with the provisions of the civil service management code as amended from time to time. Copies of the civil service management code are available electronically at:

www.civilservice.gov.uk/management__information/management/management__code/index.asp

DEFENCE

Defence Dental Agency

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Ivor Caplin): As part of my strategy for improving the management and delivery of health services across defence, the defence dental agency will be disestablished as an agency with effect from 1 April 2005. On that date responsibility for delivering defence dental services will transfer to the director general healthcare. The re-named defence dental services organisation will become a component of his "managed military health system for force generation".

This decision follows a full review of the DDA's status in line with the recommendations of the landscape review and in recognition of the changes that have taken place since the medical quinquennial review of 2001, most notably the appointment of a director general healthcare to develop and implement a coherent end-to-end process for the delivery of health services to military personnel and entitled dependants. The review concluded that the important work of the DDA in promoting oral health, providing a primary dental treatment service and providing deployable dental personnel to support operations, should be streamlined and rationalised within DG healthcare's managed military health system in support of force generation.

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[1] The statutory bodies and office holders are:

Chief Charity Commissioner
Chief Land Registrar
Commissioners of Customs and Excise
Commissioners of Inland Revenue
Crown Estate Commissioners
Director of the Assets Recovery Agency
Director of National Savings and Investments
Director of Public Prosecutions
Director of the Serious Fraud Office
Director General of Telecommunications
Director General of Water Services
Food Standards Agency
Gas and Electricity Markets Authority
Government Actuary
HM Chief Inspector of Schools in England
International Rail Regulator
Office of Fair Trading
Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration and Health Service Commissioners
Postal Services Commission
Rail Regulator

I am confident that this arrangement will preserve the benefits that have accrued as a result of agency status (improved tri-service working, professionalism and customer focus) while delivering real business benefits—contributing to a stronger emphasis on the health needs of service personnel to ensure that they are fit and healthy to deploy when needed.

Trident Missile

The Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Geoffrey Hoon): The current estimate of the total acquisition cost of the Trident programme, with payments already made expressed at the prices and exchange rates actually incurred and future spend at the current financial year exchange rate (the hybrid) estimate, is now £9,804 million. Leaving aside the effects of price inflation and exchange rate variation there has been a cost increase of £3 million which reflects adjustments to the final outturn costs in the submarine area. Expenditure on the Trident acquisition programme to 30 September 2003 represented over 99 per cent. of the total estimate. If all expenditure, past and projected, is brought up to this current year's economic conditions (the non-hybrid estimate) the estimate is £14,893 million.

The programme continues to show an overall reduction in real terms on its original 1982 estimate. This reduction, including the savings resulting from the decision to process missiles at the United States facility at Kings Bay, Georgia, now stands at over £3.6 billion at current prices.

The proportion of the estimate for work undertaken in the United Kingdom continues to be around 70 per cent.

Our four in-service Vanguard class submarines are successfully maintaining continuous at-sea deterrence, with HMS Vanguard nearing completion of a planned major overhaul.

Estimate table *£ million*

	US	*UK*	*TOTAL*
Hybrid			
Previous estimate (2003) at 2002–03			
Economic conditions (£1:$1.39)	2,884	6,918	9,802
Real changes	0	+3	+3
Price inflation on unspent balance	0	0	0
Exchange rate variation on unspent balance	-1		-1
Revised estimate at 2003–04			
Economic conditions (£1:$1.514)	2,883	6,921	9,804
Non-hybrid			
Previous estimate (2003) at 2002–03			
Economic conditions (£:$1.39)	4,336	10,578	14,914
Real changes	0	+3	+3
Price inflation	+74	+265	+338
Exchange rate variation	-362		-362
Revised estimate at 2003–04			
Economic conditions (£1:$1.514)	4,048	10,846	14,893

Note:

Figures rounded to nearest £ million hence any apparent imbalances.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

"Parental Separation: Children's Needs and Parents' Responsibilities: Next Steps"

The Secretary of State for Education and Skills (Ruth Kelly): This statement is being made on a joint basis, together with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs and Lord Chancellor, and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and Minister for Women and Equality.

I am pleased to report that "Parental Separation: Children's Needs and Parents' Responsibilities: Next Steps" is today being presented to Parliament, and sets out the Government's response to the consultation on the proposals set out in "Parental Separation: Children's Needs and Parents' Responsibilities" which was published on 21 July 2004.

Parental separation is potentially damaging for children involved, especially where the separation is acrimonious. Each separation occurs in different circumstances and parents are, of course, best placed to decide the arrangements that are most likely to meet the needs of their own children. The Government's role is to provide and improve the legislative framework and related services, also working with others to make available advice and support.

We received over 250 responses to the consultation and I am grateful for respondents' comments and suggestions. While opinions about individual proposals differed, the overwhelming majority of respondents welcomed the general thrust of the Green Paper. Each of the actions set out in the "Next Steps" response, informed by the consultation responses, will be taken forward in a timely way, with new legislation being pursued as soon as parliamentary time allows.

A topic that was frequently raised in the consultation responses was whether, and what kind, of legislative change was needed to reinforce the proposals. Some respondents called for a presumption of equal contact after separation to be introduced, while many others were supportive of the current legal position. The Government are not persuaded that any legislative change to introduce a presumption of equal contact would benefit children. New legislation will be introduced in the areas of facilitation of contact and enforcement of contact orders.

In addition to the launch of the response document, I am also pleased to announce that we are investing £3 million and £4.5 million in 2006–07 and 2007–08 respectively to develop services to support child contact, including those delivered through child contact centres. We will be working over the coming months to develop specific plans for the use of these new resources. In addition, we are today launching a revised version of the "Parenting Plans", which will be subject to consultation.

I am confident that the implementation of the agenda for action set out in the "Next Steps" will secure improved outcomes for children who experience the separation of their parents.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Iran (Nuclear Programme)

The Minister for Europe (Mr. Denis MacShane): My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs has today laid before the House Command Paper 6443 "Iran's Nuclear Programme: A Collection of Documents". Cm 6443, which includes a preface by the Foreign Secretary, records the international effort over the past two years to establish with confidence whether Iran's nuclear programme is for peaceful purposes. Copies will be placed in the Library of the House and the Vote Office.

Bosnia and Herzegovina (Export Licence Applications)

The Minister for Europe (Mr. Denis MacShane): In December 2004 the Government issued four licences for the export of armoured jackets to the Ministry of Security in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Ministry of Security required the vests for the State Information and Protection Agency (SIPA). SIPA is responsible for, inter alia, diplomatic protection, which includes the British Embassy in Sarajevo as well as the missions of EU partners and other allies; tackling organised crime; and investigating war crimes.

An EU arms embargo has been in place against Bosnia and Herzegovina since 1996. The purpose of the embargo was to aid the establishment of peace and stability for the people of the region, taking into account in particular the need to ensure the safety of international troops and civilian personnel deployed. The embargo was amended in 1999 to exclude de-mining equipment and the transfer of small arms to the police.

We fully support the EU embargo. However, we are, in limited circumstances, prepared to make exceptions where denying an export would frustrate the purposes of the embargo. The UK has been active in encouraging Bosnia and Herzegovina to take greater responsibility for maintaining the rule of law and strengthening civilian policing. I am confident that granting this exception is fully consistent with this responsible approach of supporting the development of civilian policing whilst respecting the aims of the embargo.

HEALTH

Medicines for Human Use (Clinical Trials) Regulations

The Minister of State, Department of Health (Ms Rosie Winterton): My noble Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Health (Lord Warner) has made the following written ministerial statement today.

I am today notifying Parliament of the Government's proposals to amend the requirements of the Medicines for Human Use (Clinical Trials) Regulations 2004 for consent in emergency situations.

The clinical trials directive[1] requires that before an incapacitated person is entered into a clinical trial his or her legal representative must give consent. Our implementing regulations include specific provision for establishing who should act as the legal representative. Since the implementing regulations came into force on 1 May 2004, researchers conducting a large international trial in cardiac arrest (the TROICA trial) have concluded that the scheme for establishing the legal representative and obtaining his or her consent is unworkable for clinical trials set in the context of emergency medicine. Thus, it would prove impossible to include UK patients in such trials unless the UK's requirements were amended.

The Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency will consult on a proposal to amend the regulations so that an incapacitated person can be entered into a clinical trial involving emergency treatment prior to consent being obtained from his or her legal representative. This exception to the requirement for prior consent would be subject to strict safeguards. The proposed approach would be consistent with the accepted international standards for conducting clinical trials in emergency situations as set out in the international conference on harmonisation guidelines[2] on good clinical practice, and with the approach for research envisaged in the Mental Capacity Bill.

It is the Government's view that the proposed amendment would ensure that the rights, safety and well-being of those participating in clinical trials of medicines are protected whilst also ensuring that new treatments for medical emergencies can be developed in the UK.

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[1] Directive 2001/20/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 4 April 2001 on the approximation of the laws, regulations and administrative provisions of the member states relating to the implementation of good clinical practice in the conduct of clinical trials on medicinal products for human use. OJ L 121 1.5.2001 p. 34

[2] Note for guidance on good clinical practice CPMP/ICH 135/95

NHS Foundation Trusts

The Secretary of State for Health (Dr. John Reid): I have today placed in the Library a list of national health service trusts that submitted a preliminary application for NHS foundation trust status in late November 2004, as part of wave two, and that have been successful in the preliminary application phase. All 32 trusts, including for the first time eight mental health trusts, will now enter the preparatory phase of the application process for NHS foundation trust status.

Applicants must satisfy the requirements of the preparatory phase and retain a three star rating this summer in order to receive my support to make an application to Monitor (whose statutory name is the Independent Regulator of NHS foundation trusts) for consideration for authorisation as a NHS foundation trust. The objective of the preparatory phase is to help applicants to develop the arrangements and systems that they will need to have in place to be established as NHS foundation trusts and operate successfully. The preparatory phase will therefore include developing new governance arrangements, a five year business strategy and a human resources strategy. Applicants will also be required to undergo an independent financial review and hold a public consultation where they must demonstrate that they have consulted staff, local NHS partners and the public on their proposals and that their proposals fit with the local vision for health services.

I expect to make decisions on preparatory phase applications in autumn 2005 only after I have had the opportunity to consider fully the outcome of the review into the policy by the Healthcare Commission (whose statutory name is the Commission for Healthcare Audit and Inspection). This is due to be published in summer 2005. Applicants will begin their public consultation only after the outcome of the review is known, which will allow them to take into consideration issues arising from the review when finalising their preparatory phase proposals. Once applicants have received my support, decisions on authorisations will strictly be for Monitor after having satisfied itself of an applicant's preparedness and viability for foundation status.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

British Energy plc

The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Ms Patricia Hewitt): British Energy plc announced on 14 January 2005 that it had successfully implemented the restructuring plan it announced on 28 November 2002.

The Government's overriding objectives in supporting British Energy were nuclear safety and security of electricity supplies. The successful completion of the restructuring has secured these objectives whilst safeguarding the interests of the taxpayer.

I would remind the House that, as part of the restructuring and in addition to the significant contribution being made by British Energy's other financial stakeholders, Government are taking financial responsibility for the company's historic spent nuclear fuel liabilities. The estimated cost to Government remains as set out in my statement to the House on 28 November 2002, i.e. £150 million to £200 million a year on average for the next 10 years, falling thereafter. British Energy will also be making new and enhanced payments, including 65 per cent. of its annual free cash-flow, to the nuclear liabilities fund (NLF) which will be used to pay for the costs of decommissioning the company's nuclear power stations and certain other nuclear liabilities. The Government are underwriting the NLF to ensure safety and environmental protection. The Government's support for British Energy has been approved by the European Commission, subject to certain conditions.

British Energy has relisted its shares and will continue as a public limited company managed by its board of directors and subject to the normal private sector disciplines and requirements. The company will have the freedom to run its business, in terms of corporate, operational and financial policies, subject both to the measures the Government have taken in the restructuring agreements, including monitoring arrangements, to manage its financial exposure to British Energy's liabilities, and to conditions attached to the European Commission's approval of the restructuring aid. The restructuring agreements strike a balance between protecting taxpayers' interests and ensuring these private sector disciplines maximise the company's contributions to its liabilities.

The Government restructuring agreement signed on 1 October 2003 has now been fulfilled. It committed the Government to entering into certain legally binding agreements on the restructuring effective date (14 January 2005) and these have now come fully into effect. The principal agreements were set out in my statement to the House of 14 October 2003, *Official Report*, column 11WS. I will be placing copies of the final versions of these agreements on my Department's website and in the Libraries of both Houses shortly.

Written Ministerial Statements

Wednesday 19 January 2005

CABINET OFFICE

Ministerial Responsibilities

The Minister for the Cabinet Office (Mr. David Miliband): A revised edition of the "List of Ministerial Responsibilities" (January 2005) has been published today and copies placed in the Library. It can also be obtained electronically at: www.knowledgenetwork.gov.uk/elmr/minister.nsf

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Gambling Commission

The Minister for Sport and Tourism (Mr. Richard Caborn): Improving safeguards for children and vulnerable adults in relation to gambling is a Government priority. As outlined in the Gambling Bill, we intend to introduce greater safeguards than are available under the present law. We need to address the challenges that are caused by new technology, by the internet and by the steady growth in consumer demand. Without the Bill, problem gambling is likely to increase. The safeguards will allow the regulator—the proposed new gambling commission—and the Government to keep the position firmly under control and to act swiftly to cut the supply of gambling opportunities, should that prove necessary.

Our intention, subject to parliamentary approval, is that we protect as many individuals as we can, from as early a date as possible. In order to do this we need to carry out essential activities to set up the gambling commission, which will require some expenditure in advance of the legislation achieving Royal Assent. Delay in funding the setting up of the gambling commission would undermine good progress being made in this area and would be contrary to the public interest.

An advance from the contingencies fund has therefore been sought and approved. Without this advance, work on the technology to support the commission's operation, accommodation and appointment of certain senior staff would suffer. This would set back plans to introduce the new safeguards that are urgently required.

Parliamentary approval for additional resources will be sought in a supplementary estimate for the Department for Culture, Media and Sport following Royal Assent of the Gambling Bill. Pending that approval, urgent cash expenditure of £367,533 will be met by a repayable cash advance from the contingencies fund.

DEFENCE

Gulf War

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Ivor Caplin): As part of the Government's continuing commitment to openness and transparency on Gulf veterans' illnesses I am today publishing the regular data on the mortality of veterans of the 1990–91 Gulf conflict. The most recent figures for the period 1 April 1991 to 31 December 2004 were published on 17 January 2005. The tables from that publication are set out below. Table 1 gives the causes of death to UK Gulf veterans over that period; table 2 shows the deaths due to neoplasms (cancers) among Gulf veterans.

As with previous information, the data for Gulf veterans are compared to that of a control group known as the Era cohort, which is made up of armed forces personnel of a similar profile in terms of gender, service, regular/reservist status and rank, who were not deployed to the Gulf. Subsequent to the previous release of this data, further examination of trends in some cause-groups has revealed differences between the Gulf and Era cohort age groups: although each Era cohort age group was randomly sampled to have the same size as the corresponding Gulf cohort age group, those who were aged 40 years or over on 1 January 1991 who deployed to the Gulf were often younger than those sampled for the Era cohort. All figures for the Era cohort have therefore been adjusted to the single years of age structure of the Gulf cohort, as at 1 January 1991, to ensure appropriate comparisons. The main impact is slightly to reduce the previously noticed excess of deaths in the Era cohort caused by disease-related conditions, and cancer in particular, increasing the similarity between the two cohorts. The effect on accidental deaths is minimal.

Key points to note in the data are:

> There were 687 deaths among Gulf veterans, compared with an estimated 688 deaths in the age-adjusted Era comparison group.
>
> Approximately 1,085 deaths would have been expected in a similar sized group of individuals from the UK general population of the same age and gender profile.

Table 1: Deaths to UK Gulf Veterans [1] 1 April 1991–31 December 2004

Causes [2] ICD Chapter	*Cause of death*	*Gulf*	*Era*	*Adjusted [3] Era*	*Crude Mortality Rate Ratio*	*Adjusted [3] Mortality Rate Ratio*	*Adjusted [3] 95% Confidence Interval*
	All deaths	687	712	688	0.96	0.99	(0.89–1.10)
	All cause coded deaths	678	700	678	0.96	0.99	(0.89–1.10)
I-XVIII	Disease related causes	305	366	341	0.83	0.88	(0.76–1.03)
I	Certain infectious and parasitic diseases	6	3	3	1.99	2.15	(0.50–9.35)
II	Neoplasms	138	154	141	0.89	0.97	(0.77–1.22)

Table 1: Deaths to UK Gulf Veterans [1] 1 April 1991–31 December 2004

Causes [2] ICD Chapter	*Cause of death*	*Gulf*	*Era*	*Adjusted [3] Era*	*Crude Mortality Rate Ratio*	*Adjusted [3] Mortality Rate Ratio*	*Adjusted [3] 95% Confidence Interval*
V	Mental and behavioural disorders	11	18	17	0.61	0.65	(0.31–1.39)
VI	Diseases of the nervous system	10	11	11	0.90	0.91	(0.93–2.14)
IX	Diseases of the circulatory system	106	130	124	0.81	0.85	(0.65–1.10)
X	Diseases of the respiratory system	10	6	5	1.66	1.79	(0.59–5.41)
XI	Diseases of the digestive system	17	24	22	0.70	0.75	(0.40–1.43)
III, IV, XII–XVIII	All other disease related causes [4]	7	20	18	0.35	0.36	(0.15–0.91)
XX	External causes of mortality	373	334	337	1.11	1.10	(0.95–1.27)
	Transport accidents:	171	138	139	1.23	1.22	(0.97–1.53)
	Land transport accident:	140	114	115	1.22	1.20	(0.94–1.55)
	Pedestrian	17	6	7	2.82	2.62	(1.03–6.64)
	Motorcycle rider	38	32	32	1.18	1.17	(0.73–1.88)
	Car occupant [5]	41	32	32	1.27	1.26	(0.79–2.01)
	Other [6]	44	44	44	0.99	0.98	(0.64–1.50)
	Water transport	5	2	2	2.49	2.44	(0.46–12.86)
	Air and space transport	26	22	22	1.18	1.17	(0.67–2.06)
	Other external causes of accidental injury:	67	61	60	1.09	1.09	(0.77–1.56)
	Falls	7	6	6	1.16	1.24	(0.44–3.51)
	Exposure to inanimate mechanical forces	12	15	16	0.80	0.73	(0.33–1.58)
	Accidental drowning and submersion and other accidental threats to breathing	13	6	6	2.16	2.05	(0.76–5.55)
	Accidental poisoning by and exposure to noxious substances	15	15	14	0.99	1.01	(0.48–2.14)
	Accidental exposure to other and unspecified factors	16	12	11	1.33	1.39	(0.65–2.00)
	Other	4	7	6	0.57	0.60	(0.17–2.14)
	Intentional self-harm and events of undetermined intent [7, 8]	120	110	112	1.09	1.06	(0.82–1.37)
	Assault	5	10	10	0.50	0.46	(0.15–1.38)
	Legal intervention and operations of war	4	5	6	0.87	0.74	(0.20–2.66)
	Sequelae of external causes of morbidity and mortality	0	2	1	0.00	0.00	(0.00–0.00)
	Deaths where the inquest has been Adjourned	6	8				
	Other deaths for which cause data are not yet available	5	8				
	Overseas deaths for which cause data are not available	4	4				

Notes:

[1] Service and Ex-Service personnel only.

[2] Causes have been coded to the World Health Organisation's International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems, 10th revision (ICD-10), 1992.

[3] Adjusted for age of the Gulf cohort at 1 January 1991. The numbers may not add-up to the totals shown due to rounding.

[4] Includes cases with insufficient information on the death certificate to provide a known cause of death.

[5] The MoD's casualty branches have notified DASA that one of the personnel who died in a road traffic accident was riding a motorbike rather than being a car occupant. This change has been reflected in the numbers.

[6] Under ICD-10 coding if the death certificate does not specifically mention the type of vehicle that was involved in the accident, the death is coded to "motor- or non-motor vehicle accident, type of vehicle unspecified". There were 36 deaths to Gulf veterans compared to 33 in the Era group.

[7] These events include those given a coroners verdict of suicide or open verdict death by a Coroner in England and Wales and similar causes in Scotland and Northern Ireland. It includes one death which has been coded to the ICD-10 code F11.1 ("Mental and behavioural disorders due to use of opoids") by the ONS. This death has been excluded from the mental and behavioural disorders.

[8] ONS have recently informed DASA that deaths where the inquest has been adjourned are coded to Y33 ("Other specified events, undetermined intent"). Historically these have been included with the intentional self-harm and events of undetermined intent.

Table 2: Deaths to UK Gulf veterans due to neoplasms: 1 April 1991–31 December 2004

Major cancer sites and specific sites with at least five deaths in one of the cohorts

ICD	*Cancer site*	*Gulf*	*Era*	*Adjusted [1] Era*	*Crude Mortality Rate Ratio*	*Adjusted [1] Mortality Rate Ratio*	*Adjusted [1] 95% Confidence Interval*
C00–D48	Neoplasms	138	154	141	0.89	0.97	(0.77–1.22)
C00–C99	Malignant Neoplasms (MN)	135	151	140	0.89	0.97	(0.77–1.22)
C00–C14	MN of lip, oral cavity and pharynx	6	6	5	0.99	1.04	(0.32–3.41)
C15–C26, C48	MN of digestive organs and peritoneum	33	39	34	0.84	0.96	(0.60–1.54)
C15	MN of oesophagus	12	5	4	2.39	2.92	(0.98–8.72)
C16	MN of stomach	1	6	4	0.17	0.19	(0.02–2.04)
C18	MN of colon	4	14	11	0.28	0.35	(0.11–1.07)
C25	MN of pancreas	6	8	8	0.75	0.78	(0.27–2.25)
C30–C39, C45	MN of respiratory and intrathoracic organs	22	30	26	0.73	0.87	(0.50–1.49)
C34	MN of bronchus and lung	19	28	24	0.68	0.80	(0.45–1.42)
C40–C44, C47, C49–C50	MN of bone, connective tissue, skin and breast	16	14	14	1.14	1.13	(0.55–2.32)
C43	Malignant melanoma of skin	7	5	5	1.39	1.42	(0.46–4.37)
C51–C68	MN if genitourinary organs	5	8	7	0.62	0.65	(0.21–2.06)
C69–C80	MN of other and unspecified sites	27	35	34	0.77	0.79	(0.48–1.31)
C71	MN of brain	18	20	19	0.90	0.93	(0.49–1.77)
C80	MN without specification of site	8	12	12	0.66	0.68	(0.28–1.65)
C81–C96	MN of lymphatic and haematopoietic tissue	26	19	17	1.36	1.45	(0.79–2.66)

Table 2: Deaths to UK Gulf veterans due to neoplasms: 1 April 1991–31 December 2004

Major cancer sites and specific sites with at least five deaths in one of the cohorts

ICD	*Cancer site*	*Gulf*	*Era*	*Adjusted*[1] *Era*	*Crude Mortality Rate Ratio*	*Adjusted*[1] *Mortality Rate Ratio*	*Adjusted*[1] *95% Confidence Interval*
C81–C85, C91.4, C96	Lymphomas	13	9	9	1.44	1.50	(0.64–3.53)
C82–C85, C91.4, C96	Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma	9	6	6	1.49	1.60	(0.57–4.51)
C91–C95 excl C91.4	Leukaemias	11	8	7	1.37	1.38	(0.53–3.59)
C92	Myeloid leukaemia	8	5	5	1.59	1.47	(0.48–4.47)
D00–D48	In situ neoplasms, benign neoplasms and neoplasms of uncertain behaviour or unspecified nature	3	3	3	0.99	0.89	(0.16–4.93)

Notes:

[1] Adjusted for age of Gulf cohort at 1 January 1991.

HOME DEPARTMENT

"Improving Opportunity, Strengthening Society"

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Fiona Mactaggart): Today I am announcing the launch of the race equality and community cohesion strategy and we are publishing race equality data for key public service areas—race equality in public services. The following documents related to this area will also be published today (http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk): "Race Equality", the "Home Secretary's Employment Targets" and "Non-Agency Home Office Diversity and Equal Opportunities Report 2003–04".

We are also publishing the Home Office overarching race equality scheme and core—Non Immigration and Nationality Department (IND)—Home Office Associate Race Equality Scheme.

The Race Equality and Community Cohesion Strategy sets out one strand of the Government's overall drive to improve fairness and opportunities for all in Britain; how we will ensure that a person's ethnicity is not a barrier to their success and how we will foster the cohesion necessary to enable people from minority and majority communities to work together for social and economic progress.

Many members of black and minority ethnic communities are very successful in Britain today, but the picture is not uniform, as certain communities still generally experience poorer outcomes than the majority—for example, in education, health and employment. Given this variation, the way we are addressing black and minority ethnic disadvantage is changing. The Government will give greater emphasis to tailored initiatives that meet the specific needs of particularly disadvantaged communities, rather than treating all black and minority ethnic communities in the same way—for example addressing specific health conditions such as heart disease in south Asian communities.

A cohesive society relies on more than equal opportunities for individuals. A number of social conditions also help people to come together from all backgrounds and develop a sense of inclusion and shared British identity. This strategy heralds the Government's intention to give greater emphasis to promoting a sense of common belonging and cohesion among groups through programmes with outcomes which include, making racism unacceptable, young people from different backgrounds to grow up with a sense of common belonging, integrating immigrants, people having opportunities to develop a greater understanding of the range of cultures that contribute to our strength as a country, people from all backgrounds having opportunities to participate in civic society and marginalising extremists who promote hate. Examples of new initiatives include a pilot citizenship day and exploring options for celebrating the transition to adulthood.

In order to drive progress, the strategy highlights the importance of the Government's overarching public service agreement to reduce race inequalities and build community cohesion. The Commission for Racial Equality will continue to develop ways to ensure that the duty on all public bodies to eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote equal opportunities and good relations is adhered to. The strategy outlines our intention to introduce new legislation against discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief in the provision of goods, facilities and services.

This is a cross-government strategy which draws together and consolidates existing programmes and introduces new measures where necessary. The focus is on practical steps which can be taken by central and local government, public services, the voluntary sector, business, local communities and citizens to make a difference.

Race Equality in Public Services brings together race equality data for the key public service areas and provides the statistical background to the Government's strategy to increase race equality and community cohesion, and for our PSA targets to tackle inequalities in public services. It includes data on the labour market, educational attainment, housing, the criminal justice system, perceptions of racial inequalities and health inequalities. It will continue to monitor outcomes in this way so that we can ensure that services are provided in a way that caters for the needs of those from difference ethnic and religious backgrounds.

Home Secretary's Employment Targets report details progress against the targets set in 1999 to measure the recruitment, retention and career progression of minority ethnic staff in the Home Office, IND, UK Passport Agency, Forensic Science Service, Prison Service, Police Service and National Probation Service. This is the fifth such annual report and marks the halfway point towards the 2009 targets. Considerable progress has been made over the last five years, the proportion of minority ethnic staff in the core Home Office has risen from 20 per cent. in 1999 to 36.3 per cent. in 2004 exceeding the 25 per cent. target set for 2009. In the Immigration Service the proportion has risen even more from 7 per cent. to 25.9 per cent., far in excess of its 7 per cent. national target. The Police Service has worked hard to increase recruitment and ensure the progression of minority ethnic staff and has seen a rise in representation from 3 per cent. in 1999 to 4.3 per cent. in 2004, narrowly missing the 2004 milestone target of 4.6 per cent.

The Home Office Diversity and Equal Opportunities Report brings together the findings from a range of diversity monitoring processes in the non-agency Home Office to provide a comprehensive picture of the diversity make-up of the department. The report fulfils the requirements of the Race Relations Act (RRA) and extends the race employment monitoring required by that Act to the other diversity strands of gender, disability and age. It includes statistics for the core Home Office and IND. As well as satisfying our legal obligations this document provides a series of benchmarks such as grade breakdown of the diversity strands, against which we can measure the success of action and initiatives under the five-year race and diversity programme. The report shows that the department employed 19,000 people, 25 per cent. of whom were from black and minority ethnic backgrounds and 3.75 per cent. of staff in the senior civil service (SCS) were from black and minority ethnic backgrounds, exceeding our target of 3.2 per cent.

The revised versions of the *Home Office Overarching Race Equality Scheme and Core (Non IND) Home Office Associate Race Equality Scheme* set out how we will meet the duties on us set out in the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and associated secondary legislation. Following the publication of the first Home Office race equality schemes in 2002, these revised version are produced in line with the requirement on all public authorities, set out in secondary legislation, to revise their race equality schemes before 31 May 2005. They are consultation documents—we are seeking views on our approach to these issues as set out in the documents.

PRIME MINISTER

The Committee on Standards in Public Life

The Prime Minister (Mr. Tony Blair): I am pleased to announce that the 10th report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life, "Getting the Balance Right: Implementing Standards of Conduct in Public Life" has been published today by the Committee. Copies have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Benefit Fraud Inspectorate

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. Chris Pond): On behalf of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, the Benefit Fraud Inspectorate (BFI) has today announced its phase 11 programme of work.

BFI will be undertaking a number of shorter inspections focused on the areas of poor local authority performance in the administration of housing benefits. Seven inspections will focus on authorities that are slow in processing new benefit claims. The authorities are Dacorum Borough Council, South Ayrshire Council, Inverclyde Council, North Wiltshire District Council, Boston Borough Council, East Dunbartonshire Council and Perth and Kinross Council.

Inspections focusing on the adequacy of councils' counter-fraud arrangements will be undertaken at Falkirk Council, West Dunbartonshire Council and Brentwood Borough Council.

Two focused inspections on authorities' control of overpayments and the causes of those overpayments will be undertaken at Aberdeen City Council and Tandridge District Council.

BFI will undertake four full inspections. Great Yarmouth Borough Council, Slough Borough Council and Malvern Hills have been identified following a "fair" score in the recent Comprehensive Performance Assessments. The fourth authority, Bridgend County Borough Council, was identified as being at risk in the recent Wales Programme of Improvement.

BFI is an independent unit within the Department for Work and Pensions that inspects and reports directly to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions on the standard of benefits administration and counter-fraud activity in local authorities and the Department itself.

"Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People"

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Maria Eagle): The Strategy Unit's report "Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People", is being published today as agreed Government policy. The report sets out an ambitious vision for improving the life chances of disabled people over the next 20 years.

The report focuses on four key aspects of disabled people's life chances: independent living, early years and family support, transition to adulthood, and employment. The practical measures are designed to:

> increase disabled people's ability to live independently—to enjoy increased choice and control over how their needs are met through individualised budgets—and to have the opportunity of a full home, work and community life;
>
> enable young disabled children and their families to enjoy ordinary lives, through access to childcare, early education and early family support, to enable them to care for their child effectively and remain socially and economically included;
>
> support disabled young people and their families through the transition to adulthood. Transition will be better planned around the needs of the individuals and service delivery will be smoother across the transition;
>
> increase the number of disabled people in employment while providing support and security for those unable to work. Employers will be able to access the right advice and information.

The Government will set up an office for disability issues—reporting to the Minister for Disabled People—to help coordinate disability policy across Government. There will be a Ministerial cross-government group on disability to lead and sustain the implementation process. Annual reports on progress will be presented to the Prime Minister and published on the internet.

Copies of the report have been placed in the Library and are available to hon. Members from the Vote Office.

Written Ministerial Statements

Thursday 20 January 2005

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Learning and Skills Council

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education and Skills (Mr. Ivan Lewis): I would inform the House that the Learning and Skills Council for England has today published its annual report and accounts for the period to 31 March 2004.

Copies have been placed in both Libraries of the House.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Mechanically Propelled Vehicles (Rights of Way)

The Minister for Rural Affairs and Local Environmental Quality (Alun Michael): The consultation paper, "Use of Mechanically Propelled Vehicles on Rights of Way" generated an enormous level of interest, reflected in over 14,000 formal responses, letter and e-mails. I am pleased to announce that I am today publishing the response to the consultation, "The Government's Framework for Action".

The responses to the consultation paper reflected a very wide range of interest. There was a clear division between those who were in favour of motorised vehicles on public rights of way and those who considered that motorised vehicles should be excluded from using the rights of way network. Responses opposed to any change were matched by a similar volume of responses calling for more extreme measures to control vehicular use than had been suggested. On the other hand research findings seem to indicate that there is a real problem in some locations but not a widespread problem. Our approach is to respond to both the responses and the research with proposals that are both proportionate and well targeted.

The response provides a consolidated statement of the Government's policy on the use of mechanically propelled vehicles on public rights of way. It incorporates our consideration of the analysis of responses to the consultation paper on proposed amendments to legislation when roads used as public paths are reclassified as restricted byways and the findings of the DEFRA research project on motor vehicles on byways open to all traffic. The full text of the DEFRA research report is also being published today.

Many of the respondees supported the need for better coordination and enforcement of vehicular offences on rights of way, especially concerning illegal use of footpaths, bridleways and restricted byways. They also recognised that the necessary powers are already available and the main obstacle is a lack of coordination between local authorities and the police to enforce these powers. With this in mind I intend to issue guidance for local authorities and the police on how best to deal with illegal vehicular use. I will also be issuing shortly a revision to the publication, "Making the Best of Byways" which deals with the management of vehicles on rights of way.

I am convinced that there is a need to promote legislation to change the basis on which public rights of way for use by mechanically propelled vehicles can be claimed. Mechanically propelled vehicles should continue to have a place in using and enjoying the rights of way network, but the ability to extend the network for motorised use purely on the basis of historic use by horse-drawn vehicles should be curtailed. This coupled with a wide range of management and enforcement measures will provide a sound, sustainable basis for providing for motor vehicles in the countryside.

Copies of the Government response and DEFRA research report have been deposited in the House Library.

HOME DEPARTMENT

National Offender Management Service (Drug Strategy)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Paul Goggins): I am today announcing the launch of the national offender management service (NOMS) drug strategy.

In line with the Government's national drug strategy 2002, NOMS has developed a comprehensive strategy for the management and treatment of problematic drug users throughout the correctional services. The strategy is based on extensive consultation with key stakeholders and has been informed by evidence-based research. This strategy complements the alcohol strategy for prisoners that was launched in December 2004.

The NOMS drug strategy draws together existing and planned drug interventions and the wider support available for drug misusers both in custody and in the community. The strategy will help create an individual focus to interventions, lower the level of harm that misusers cause themselves and others, and reduce the supply and demand of illicit drugs in prisons.

The strategy, which fits squarely with the work already under-way with the Government's drug interventions programme, will help support the Home Office target of reducing reoffending by reinforcing the end-to-end case management processes that are being adopted throughout NOMS.

It is essential that effective drug treatment—as envisaged under this strategy— continues to form part of the overall offender management process. Benefiting from NOMS's enhanced offender management arrangements, the strategy will see improvements in the continuity of care, with a focus on an individual's handover at critical transition points in the criminal justice system—including when released on licence and upon completion of sentence. This in turn will support effective resettlement and reintegration into society.

There are an estimated 250,000–280,000 problematic drug users in the UK. At any one time around a third—80,000—are serving custodial or community sentences. This underlines the pivotal role that NOMS has to play in the delivery of drug treatment.

A copy of the strategy is available in the House Library.

Futurebuilders

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Fiona Mactaggart): Baroness Jill Pitkeathley has been appointed by the Home Secretary as chair of the independent advisory board for Futurebuilders, a non- departmental public body (NDPB), that will advise Ministers on the continuing objectives, priorities and governance; and on the implementation and effectiveness of the Futurebuilders investment fund.

The appointment was made on 22 December 2004 and will run until April 2007 in the first instance.

Baroness Pitkeathley is currently the chair of the Children and Families Court Advisory and Support service (CAFCASS). She has previously served as chair of two other NDPBs, the New Opportunities Fund (NOF) and the General Social Care Council (GSCC).

Terrorism Act 2000

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Charles Clarke): I am pleased to say that Lord Carlile of Berriew QC has completed the report on the operation of part VII of the Act, which will be laid before the House today.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Justice Oversight Commissioner

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Paul Murphy): The Government have received and welcomed the third report from the justice oversight commissioner, the right hon. Lord Clyde, on the progress achieved in implementing the recommendations of the Review of the Criminal Justice System in Northern Ireland. Consistent with his terms of reference, the report was submitted to the Attorney-General, Baroness Ashton, Minister for the Northern Ireland court service, and me in December.

Lord Clyde concludes that the position overall is one of solid progress continuing to be made over the whole range of the work. While some few areas of delay have been identified, as more and more of the particular elements of the whole package of reforms begin to fall into place, the picture of the new system of criminal justice is beginning to emerge and the overall progress towards that end remains commendable. The Government warmly endorses these conclusions.

Copies of the commissioner's report have been placed in the Library.

Electoral Law (Northern Ireland) Act 1962 (Amendment) Order

The Minister of State, Northern Ireland Office (Mr. John Spellar): I am announcing that today an Order in Council has been laid to move the date of local elections in Northern Ireland on a permanent basis from the third Wednesday in May to the first Thursday in May. If this measure is accepted by Parliament and the Privy Council it will mean that the Northern Ireland local elections due on Wednesday 18 May 2005 will now take place on Thursday 5 May.

This measure brings local election dates in Northern Ireland into line with the rest of the UK.

The Government discussed this step in advance with both the Chief Electoral Officer of Northern Ireland and the Electoral Commission.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Takeover Bids

The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Ms Patricia Hewitt): A consultative document seeking views on the Government's proposals for implementing the "EU Directive on Takeover Bids" has been published today. Copies are available in the Library and on the DTI website at:

www.dti.gov.uk/cld/current.htm. The deadline for comments is 15 April.

The consultative document reflects the Government's view that our existing system of takeover regulation overseen by the takeover panel has many strengths and enjoys the confidence of business. In order to minimise disruption to the current regime, the Government have therefore concluded that the panel should retain responsibility for takeover regulation and that a central objective in implementing the directive should be to build on the strengths of the existing system.

In order to comply with the requirements of the directive this will require the panel being given powers to make statutory rules while retaining scope to determine its own constitutional and operational framework. The consultative document explains the issues to which this gives rise and how the Government propose to deal with them.

Primary legislation making the necessary provisions to implement the directive on this basis will be introduced when parliamentary time allows.

Written Answers to Questions

Monday 10 January 2005

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Crown Prosecution Service

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Solicitor-General if she will seek agreement to secure the use of seized funds representing proceeds of crime to reward good working practices in the Crown Prosecution Service. [206424]

The Solicitor-General: The 2004 Spending Review, provided for a new scheme to incentivise criminal justice agencies to recover from criminals the proceeds of their crimes. The Crown Prosecution Service is working with officials from the Serious Fraud Office, the Customs and Excise Prosecution Office, the Home Office the Department for Constitutional Affairs and other partners in the criminal justice system to develop such an incentivisation scheme, for agreement with HM Treasury, to be funded from assets recovered from the enforcement of successful confiscation orders, cash forfeitures and civil recovery.

Full details are under consideration but have not yet been agreed. It is proposed that the new scheme will become operative from April 2006.

The proposed scheme will encourage best practice and incentivise improved performance by all agencies involved in confiscation, cash seizure and civil recovery, to benefit from recovered assets. It should ensure that more criminals are deprived of the benefit they have obtained from criminal conduct.

Departmental Files

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Solicitor-General whether it is the policy of the Department to retain for the benefit of future *(a)* historians and *(b)* applicants under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 the same (i) complete categories of files, (ii) numbers of files and (iii) representative examples of files from categories of files destroyed as had been preserved prior to the passage of that Act. [203307]

The Solicitor-General: In accordance with the Public Records Act 1958 S.3, the selection of records of enduring historical value for permanent preservation at The National Archives (TNA) will continue to take place in The Law Officers' Departments under the guidance and supervision of TNA staff. The Department will also comply with the Code of Practice on Records Management, issued by the Lord Chancellor under S.46 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, which underlines the importance of having clear selection policies and disposal schedules in place.

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Solicitor-General how many departmental files have been destroyed in each of the past five years. [203308]

The Solicitor-General: In accordance with their selection policies and disposal schedules, the Law Officers' Departments have destroyed the following number of files in each of the last five years:

Treasury Solicitor

	Number of Files Destroyed
2000	13,347
2001	11,154
2002	8,857
2003	9,630
2004	9,246

Serious Fraud Office

	Number of Files Destroyed
2000	8
2001	0
2002	31
2003	60
2004	3

HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate

HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate was created as a result of the Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate Act 2000. In accordance with its selection policies and disposal schedules the Department has yet to destroy any registered files.

Crown Prosecution Service

The information requested is not collated centrally and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Legal Secretariat to the Law Officers

The information cannot be obtained from existing sources (the software does not enable the destruction of files to be tracked).

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Solicitor-General what changes have been promulgated in each of the past five years to the guidelines or other criteria for the retention or destruction of departmental files. [203309]

The Solicitor-General: Since 1999, the Law Officers' Departments between them have produced at least two schedules for the disposal of records which are specific to its administrative activities. They also disposes of their records in accordance with over 20 guidance notes produced by the National Archives (TNA) over the last five years, covering disposal schedules, managing records in the electronic environment, as well as overarching records management guidance. Further details of this guidance can be found on TNA's website at: http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/recordsmanagement/advice.

Invoice Payments

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Solicitor-General what the average length of time was between the date of invoices issued to her Department from a supplier and payment by the Department of the invoice in the last 12 months for which figures are available; what percentage of these invoices were paid within 30 days of the date of issue of the invoice; what percentage of these invoices remained unpaid after 90 days; and if she will make a statement on the Department's policy on the payment of invoices issued to it. [200626]

The Solicitor-General: During the period 1 April 2003 to 31 March 2004, the Law Officers' Departments paid supplier invoices, on average, as shown in the table. The table also shows, for the same period, the percentage of undisputed invoices which the Departments each paid within 30 days and the percentage which remained unpaid after 90 days, where these figures are available. Where these figures are not held centrally, data could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

The Government are committed to improving the payment culture in the United Kingdom in order to create a fair and stable environment for business transactions. The Law Officers' Departments support this policy and are committed to paying all invoices in accordance with agreed contractual conditions or, where no such conditions exist and the invoice is not in dispute, within thirty days of receipt of the goods or services or presentation of a valid invoice.

Law Officers' Departments—Payment of Invoices for the 12 months 1 April 2003 to 31 March 2004

Department	*Average length of time between the date of invoice and payment*	*Percentage paid within 30 days of the date of issue or within contractual terms*	*Percentage remaining after 90 days*
Treasury Solicitor's Department[1]	Figures are not kept on the average length of time taken to make payments	92.62	0.61
Crown Prosecution Service[2]	28 days	[3]80	[3]7
Serious Fraud Office	Figures are not kept on the average length of time taken to make payments	92.3	Figures are not kept on the length of time invoices are unpaid longer than 90 days

[1] includes figures for the Legal Secretariat to the Law Officers and HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate; the figures do not include payments for Treasury Solicitor's Department disbursements associated with legal cases as these can be subject to further negotiation. However these payments are monitored internally to ensure delay is as low as possible

[2] figures for the Crown Prosecution Service include payments for the services of lawyer agents in the magistrates' courts and external advocates in the Crown Court; they do not include payment of claims for travel and subsistence costs for Witness attendance at court.

[3] figures refer to undisputed invoices

Travel Costs

Mr. Ruffley: To ask the Solicitor-General what the total travel costs to her Department have been for *(a)* Ministers, *(b)* special advisers and *(c)* officials for each year since 1997. [203796]

The Solicitor-General: Since 1999, the Government publishes, on an annual basis, the total costs of all ministerial overseas travel and a list of all visits by Cabinet Ministers costing in excess of £500. Copies of the list are available in the Library of the House.

The Law Officers do not retain any Special Advisers.

Details of the cost of the Law Officers' domestic travel are not held separately from that incurred by officials of the Treasury Solicitors' Department and can be obtained only at disproportionate cost. The total expenditure on travel for each year since 1997 in respect of the Law Officers' Departments is shown in the tables.

All travel is undertaken in accordance with the guidelines set out in the Ministerial Code and Civil Service Management Code.

Treasury Solicitors Department including the Legal Secretariat to the Law Officers and HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate[1]

£

	Cost per annum
1998–99	310,600
1999–2000	248,900
2000–01	190,500
2001–02	168,800
2002–03	293,900
2003–04	319,400

[1] Includes travel by the Law Officers and officials.

Crown Prosecution Service

£

	Cost per annum
1997–98	2,654,300
1998–99	2,739,800
1999–2000	3,138,000
2000–01	3,430,200
2001–02	4,255,500
2002–03	4,543,200
2003–04	4,819,600

Serious Fraud Office

£

	Cost per annum
1997–98	333,000
1998–98	243,000
1999–2000	314,000
2000–01	467,000
2001–02	569,000
2002–03	493,000
2003–04	527,000

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

Documents

Sue Doughty: To ask the Leader of the House what his Department's policy is in relation to the storage of documents and the use of shredders; and whether this policy has been reviewed in the past 12 months. [206739]

Mr. Woolas: The Privy Council Office (PCO) provides the administrative support for the Leader of the House. PCO continues to implement well established policies and procedures for the review and disposal of files in accordance with the Public Records Act. Documents which are no longer required are destroyed by shredding or other means. This policy has been reviewed in the past 12 months.

E-mails

Sue Doughty: To ask the Leader of the House what his Department's policy is in relation to the storage and deletion of e-mails; and whether this policy has been reviewed in the past 12 months. [206738]

Mr. Woolas: The Privy Council Office (PCO) provides the administrative support for the Leader of the House. PCO's policy is to save e-mails which form part of the official record for as long as business needs require. E-mails are then stored in accordance with record management procedures. Further e-mail guidance is available at the National Archive website, www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/electronic records/advice/pdf/managingemails.pdf.

E-mails which are no longer required for business reasons are deleted. This policy has been reviewed in the past 12 months.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Leader of the House on how many occasions between 31 March 2002 and 31 March 2003 his special advisers travelled abroad in an official capacity; what places were visited; and how much each visit cost. [207183]

Mr. Hain: None.

WALES

Ministerial Visits

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what ministerial visits are planned for each Minister in his Department in the next six months; and if he will make a statement. [199885]

Mr. Hain: I will write to the hon. Member and place a copy in the Library of the House of Commons.

Public Bodies (Abolition)

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list National Assembly for Wales sponsored public bodies that may be abolished by *(a)* decision of the Assembly, *(b)* primary legislation in the United Kingdom Parliament and *(c)* revocation of the Royal Charter. [204228]

Mr. Hain: The information is as follows:

(a) The bodies listed in Schedule 4 Part 1 of the Government of Wales Act 1998 together with bodies created since devolution by the Assembly under its own powers may be abolished by decision of the Assembly.

(b) All Assembly sponsored public bodies, including those covered by *(a)* above and *(c)* below, may be abolished by primary legislation in the UK Parliament. In the case of bodies set up by Royal Charter, the legislation would provide for its revocation.

(c) All bodies set up by Royal Charter may be abolished by revocation of that charter.

Working Time Regulations

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many officials working in ministerial private offices in the Department have worked more than a 48 hour week at any time in the last 12 months for which figures are available; how many of those had signed a waiver under working time regulations; and what percentage these figures represented of the total in each case. [204148]

Mr. Hain: The Working Time Regulations provide workers with the protection of a limit of an average of 48 hours a week working time. This is not an absolute cap of 48 hours in any one week. This average is normally calculated over a 17-week reference period, although this can be longer in certain situations (26 weeks) and can be extended by agreement (up to 52 weeks). Workers may choose to work more than 48 hours per week over this reference period by signing an opt-out agreement, but employers cannot force a worker to sign an opt-out, and workers cannot be subjected to detriment for refusing to sign an opt-out.

The Wales Office has a duty to ensure the health and safety of its staff. No member of staff has worked in excess of the working time regulation (an average of 48 hours a week over a 17-week period).

One member of private office staff has voluntarily opted out of this regulation.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Alvis plc

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs on what date his Department was informed of the decision by Alvis Plc to conclude a consultancy agreement with Global Select. [205691]

Mr. Rammell: The allegations relating to the sale of military equipment to the Indonesians in 1995–96 reported this month in *The Guardian* newspaper are currently being investigated in the UK and Indonesia. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has to date found no record of being informed of specific agents for the contracts between Alvis and Global Select.

Bhutan

Mr. Oliver Letwin: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on insurgency in Bhutan. [205394]

Mr. Alexander: There is no recent history of indigenous insurgency in Bhutan. There was unrest in the late 1980s and early 1990s which resulted in violent clashes between Bhutanese security forces and supporters of the largely ethnic Nepali Bhutan People's Party. Up to 100,000 Bhutanese of Nepali origin fled the country and now live in refugee camps in Nepal.

In December 2003, the Bhutanese army launched a successful campaign against Indian insurgents who were operating out of Bhutan against India.

China

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the implications of the detention of Yu Jie, Liu Xiaobo and Zhang Zuhua for human rights in China. [205892]

Mr. Rammell: Yu Jie, Liu Xiaobo and Zhang Zuhua were detained on Monday 13 December in Beijing, and were released the following day.

HMG takes human rights problems in China very seriously. We continue to talk to the Chinese Government about these, including through our bilateral Human Rights Dialogue, the last round of which was held in Beijing on 22 November.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Government of China with respect to the detention without charge of Pastor Zhang Rongliang; and if he will make a statement. [206234]

Mr. Rammell: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Stroud (Mr. Drew) on 20 December (*Official Report*, column 1397W).

Christmas Cards

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the cost of postage was for official departmental Christmas cards in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004. [205190]

Mr. Straw: In 2003 and 2004, the cost of postage for official departmental Christmas cards sent out by Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) Ministers was £232.37 and £94.50 respectively.

In respect of the rest of the FCO, including its overseas Posts, to provide this information could be provided only disproportionate cost.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) how many departmental staff have responsibility for preparing Christmas cards; [205194]

(2) how many hours of staff time were taken up in preparation of Christmas cards in 2004. [205198]

Mr. Straw: This information could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many official Christmas cards were sent out by his Department in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004. [205201]

Mr. Straw: Approximately 2,000 cards were sent out by Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) Ministers in 2003; and fewer than 1,000 in 2004.

In respect of the rest of the FCO, including its overseas posts, this information could be provided only at disproportionate costs.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the cost was of purchasing official departmental Christmas cards in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004. [205204]

Mr. Straw: In 2003 and 2004, the cost of official departmental Christmas cards sent out by Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) Ministers was £1,553 and £1,268 respectively.

In respect of the rest of the FCO including its overseas posts, this information could be provided only at disproportionate costs.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what percentage of official departmental Christmas cards included a contribution to charity in their cost; and which charities benefited from such a contribution. [205208]

Mr. Straw: All official Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) Christmas cards include a contribution to charity.

In 2003 over £15,000 (the profit generated from the sale of official FCO cards) was donated to the FCO Welfare Fund and the Diplomatic Families Association Emergency and Welfare Fund. Figures are not yet available for 2004.

UNICEF also benefited from my own specially-printed Christmas cards (£218.50 in 2003 and £207 in 2004).

Colombia

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Government of Colombia on the killings of *(a)* Villapon Vega, *(b)* Antenor Martinez, *(c)* Mayerli Culnma, *(d)* Nahoralba Culma and *(e)* Elkin Conde; and if he will make a statement. [206218]

Mr. Rammell: We have raised the specific cases the honourable Member refers to with the Government of Colombia and await their reply. We will continue to monitor these and other human rights cases that we regularly draw to their attention.

Human rights lie at the heart of our policy towards Colombia. We regularly urge the Colombian Government to implement outstanding recommendations from the annual reports of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. We are working with them and other partners, including the EU, UN and civil society, to help bring about an improvement in Colombia's human rights situation. As part of this process I intend travelling to Colombia early in 2005 for a key meeting of international support to Colombia. This meeting will assess progress on human rights since the London meeting that we hosted in July 2003.

Common Travel Area

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions his Department has had with the Government of the Irish Republic about the future of the common travel area with reference to the requirement for passport or other identification to be shown at Dublin airport by passengers arriving from London's airports; and if he will make a statement. [207120]

Mr. MacShane: None.

Conferences

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many conferences were *(a)* attended by officials from his Department, *(b)* cancelled by and *(c)* facilitated by his Department in each year since 1997; and what the (i) cost to the Department and (ii) location was in each case. [205760]

Mr. Rammell: The details of conferences as requested are not held centrally within the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Convention on the Future of Europe

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make it his policy to insert references to the Minority Report of the Convention on the Future of Europe when official government publications refer in detail to the activities of the Convention; and if he will make a statement. [207259]

Mr. MacShane: HMG's views on the minority report were set out by my right hon Friend the Prime Minister in his statement to the House on 23 June 2003 *Official Report*, column 707. The report will be referred to in official government publications referring to the activities of the Convention if that is appropriate in the circumstances.

Darfur

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps are being taken by the Government to increase international monitoring of the security situation in Darfur. [205434]

Mr. Mullin: On 20 October, the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council agreed to expand its monitoring mission in Darfur from less than 500 to more than 3,000 personnel. We fully support this decision. We have committed over £14 million to the African Union for this purpose, from which we have provided significant logistical support, including 143 vehicles. We have also provided military planning expertise to the AU in Addis Ababa and seconded a UK observer to the mission. The UK was also instrumental in securing €92 million in funding from the EU.

Decade of Roma Inclusion

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he has taken to prepare for the launch in the UK in 2005 of the European Union Decade of Roma Inclusion. [205311]

Mr. MacShane: The UK is participating actively in the programme of the Decade of Roma Inclusion which was established by eight Central and Eastern European countries (Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Macedonia, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro and Slovakia).

The Government of Hungary hosts its secretariat. An International Steering Committee made up of government representatives, Roma representatives from each participating country, international donors, and other international organisations is in charge of its planning.

The Roma Education Fund to which the Government are planning to contribute £200,000 will be a major part of the programme. There are no current plans for a formal launch by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office of this programme.

Democratic Republic of Congo

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of the role of the commander of the 8th military region in the Democratic Republic of Congo in the current instability in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo; and if he will make a statement. [206308]

Mr. Mullin: The 8th Military Region, like others, has suffered from problems with command and control, and troop discipline. This has led to instability in the region. The UK has continued to press for army integration so the different elements of the transitional Government can work together in a concerted effort to provide peace and security. A new commander of the 8th Military Region, General Amisi, has just been appointed. We are therefore not yet in a position to assess his role in the current situation in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of Bizima Karaha's recent reports of inclusion of Interahamwe troops in the armed forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo; what discussions on this *(a)* he, *(b)* members of his Department and *(c)* representatives of the UK Government have had with (i) members and (ii) representatives of the Government of (A) the Democratic Republic of Congo and (B) Rwanda; and if he will make a statement. [206310]

Mr. Mullin: Following its signature of the Pretoria Agreement, the Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) announced that the Ex-FAR/Interahamwe were no longer welcome on its territory. Several thousand still remain. There are reports that Ex-FAR/Interahamwe forces are formally part of the DRC armed forces but we have no evidence to substantiate this.

We have regularly reminded the DRC Government of the need to deal with the problem of the Ex-FAR/Interahamwe.

We frequently discuss the need for international action to disarm Ex-FAR/Interahamwe at all levels with the Rwandan Government.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of *(a)* the numbers, *(b)* the aim and *(c)* the activities of the Congolese Rally for Democracy; how these have changed since 1998; and if he will make a statement. [206314]

Mr. Mullin: It is not possible to give an accurate indication of the numbers of political and military members of the four movements that emerged from the Congolese Rally for Democracy (RCD).

The largest group, the RCD-Goma, forms part of the Transitional Government, and its President is one of the DRC's four vice-presidents. They have affirmed their commitment to holding elections in the DRC in 2005. So have two of the other factions, the RCD-N and RCD-ML.

The RCD have now registered as a political party. Their troops are now part of the DRC armed forces.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of *(a)* the number and *(b)* the activities of Rwandan Hutu rebel forces in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo; and if he will make a statement. [206315]

Mr. Mullin: The Ex-FAR/Interahamwe are a well-armed force of several thousand. They continue to pose a threat to the security and stability of western Rwanda and menace civilian populations in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of the *(a)* command structure and *(b)* ethnic makeup of the armed forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo; and if he will make a statement. [206316]

Mr. Mullin: The command structure of the armed forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo has two central authorities and eleven military regions. While there has been integration at the national and regional headquarter level, army integration has yet to get fully underway.

There are over 400 different ethnic groups within the Democratic Republic of Congo. Many of these groups are represented in the armed forces.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of the role of *(a)* Major Kasongo and *(b)* Colonel Jules Mutebutsi in the current situation in South Kivu; and if he will make a statement. [206317]

Mr. Mullin: As far as we are aware, neither Major Kasongo nor Colonel Jules Mutebutsi, who has been detained in Rwanda, have any identifiable role in the current situation in South Kivu.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of the impact on stability of the South Kivu province in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo of the replacement of General Nabiolwa with General Mbuza Mabe; and if he will make a statement. [206318]

Mr. Mullin: South Kivu continues to be unstable and troops of the 10th Military Region continue to be accused of abuses against the civilian population. We continue to press the Transitional Government for progress on Security Sector Reform.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of claims by General Laurent Nkunda of atrocities being committed against the Banyamulenge community in Bukavu, South Kivu province, eastern Democratic Republic of Congo; and if he will make a statement. [206319]

Mr. Mullin: There have been many acts of violence committed in South Kivu, including against Banyamulenge communities. The UN Peacekeeping Force in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC) found no evidence of a systematic campaign against the Banyamulenge as Nkunda alleged in June 2004. We are working with groups in South Kivu to promote reconciliation among communities and condemn any attempts to fuel ethnic tensions.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of the planned deployment of 10,000 members of the armed forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo to the North Kivu province in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo; what assessment his Department has made of the impact such a deployment may have on the stability of the region as a whole; and if he will make a statement. [206323]

Mr. Mullin: The Transitional Government in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is seeking to assert its authority over the whole of its territory. It has announced that further troops are to be sent to North Kivu to help deal with the problem of the Ex-FAR/Interaham we.

The deployment of large numbers of troops into a historically troubled area will require careful handling by the DRC authorities to avoid further fighting between the various factions of the DRC armed forces.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the cost of refurbishments in his Department was in each year since 1997; and what the planned expenditure is for 2005–06. [205678]

Mr. Rammell: The Department has spent the following sums on refurbishment since 1997:

	(£ million)
1997–98	3.2
1998–99	4.7
1999–2000	22.5
2000–01	31.2
2001–02	10.1
2002–03	8.9
2003–04	6.2
2004–05[1]	5.7
2005–06[2]	9.1

[1] expenditure to date

[2] planned expenditure

The figures shown cover refurbishment at home and overseas. The significantly higher costs incurred in 1999–2000 and 2000–01 include the refurbishment of the Old Admiralty Building.

Estonian/Russian Border

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on his policy towards disputed areas of the Estonian/Russian border. [207075]

Mr. MacShane: The UK, along with EU partners, looks forward to the early signature and ratification of the border agreement agreed between Russia and Estonia.

EU Intelligence Sharing and Co-ordination Service

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 14 December, *Official Report*, column 1065, on the EU Intelligence Sharing and Co-ordination Service, what the highest classification of information supplied by the UK Government to the Situation Centre is; which departments have supplied such information; and if he will make a statement. [207139]

Mr. MacShane: UK information is released to the Situation Centre on a strict need-to-know basis at classifications up to and including SECRET. The Cabinet Office, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Ministry of Defence and Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre have all provided information.

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 14 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1065W, on EU Intelligence Sharing and Co-ordination Services, what analyses and risk assessments the EU Situation Centre has produced; what the security classification is of each; who is responsible for making decisions about the work undertaken by the Centre; and if he will make a statement. [207283]

Mr. MacShane: The EU Situation Centre (SitCen) has produced a range of analyses on issues of interest identified within the European Security Strategy. This includes risk assessments for EU-led crisis management operations, strategic counter-terrorism analysis and assessments of WMD proliferation. The reporting is classified according to its content and the original classification of member states' inputs. This is in line with EU security regulations. The Situation Centre's scheduled work programme is approved by all member states through the rotating EU Presidency. Additionally, any member state is at liberty to request SitCen reporting on topics of common EU interest.

EU/Israel Association

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if the UK will press the EU to take appropriate measures under Article 79 of the EU/Israel Association Agreement to enforce the human rights conditions of the Agreement. [205660]

Mr. MacShane: We do not plan to call for the EU to take appropriate measures under Article 79 of the EU-Israel Association Agreement.

The Government believes that as a friend of Israel and the Palestinians we can best exert influence and encourage both sides to take the steps needed for progress through close engagement. We, and our EU partners, regularly call on both sides to meet their roadmap commitments (for the Palestinians this includes taking effective action against terrorism and for the Israelis a freeze on all settlement activity and the easing of restrictions on the movement of persons and goods). We do not believe, however, that punitive measures would bring the parties any nearer to a peaceful resolution.

European Constitution

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs further to paragraph 15 of the Explanatory Memorandum on the EU Constitutional Treaty, when legal primacy of European law was accepted by the UK Parliament. [207260]

Mr. MacShane: 17 October 1972.

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the articles in the draft European constitution in which the text differs from the equivalent articles that formed part of previous treaties. [207095]

Mr. MacShane: Following the commitment made to Parliament by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister on 4 May 2004, *Official Report*, column 1456W, the Government will shortly be publishing an analysis of the EU constitutional treaty, indicating which parts of the constitution correspond to provisions in the existing treaties and which parts are new.

European Convention

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on his policy towards the European Convention's Minority Report, submitted by the Convention President alongside the Convention draft; and whether Members of the UK delegation raised the issues contained therein with fellow representatives. [207099]

Mr. MacShane: HMG's views on the minority report were set out by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister in his statement to the House on 23 June 2003, *Official Report*, column 707. The report will be referred to in official government publications referring to the activities of the Convention if that is appropriate in the circumstances.

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what declarations made by UK representatives to the Convention on the future of Europe have been appended to the European Convention; and what legal status they will have should the Convention be ratified. [207280]

Mr. MacShane: The work of the Convention on the Future of Europe was the starting point for negotiations on a Constitutional Treaty between member states within the Intergovernmental Conference (IGC). The Final Act of the IGC, signed at the same time as the Constitutional Treaty, includes declarations made by participants in the IGC in relation to the Constitutional Treaty. Such declarations may be relevant to the interpretation and application of the Treaty. This does not apply to statements or declarations made by Members of the Convention. These are not included in the Final Act.

European Union

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the activities to raise awareness of the EU that his Department is undertaking; and who the participants are. [204459]

Mr. MacShane: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave him on 16 December 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1269–270W.

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make it his policy to detail the costs of EU membership in future publications on the benefits of such membership; and if he will make a statement. [207133]

Mr. MacShane: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office does indeed detail the costs and obligations, as well as the benefits, of EU membership in its publications (for example, in the Guide to the European Union deposited in the Library of the House on 1 November. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office is committed to communicating accurately and objectively the facts about Britain's EU membership to the public.

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will define his Department's interpretation of the term federal in relation to EU matters. [207118]

Mr. MacShane: "Federal" is not a word the Department uses in relation to EU matters. Nor is the word used in the EU constitutional treaty.

Expatriate Communities

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs which countries he estimates to have the 20 largest expatriate communities of UK citizens; and how many UK citizens he estimates live in each. [204456]

Mr. Mullin: The following estimated figures are taken from the 2003–04 Consular Annual Returns from overseas posts. There is no requirement for UK citizens to register with British missions overseas and those that have represent only a small fraction of the estimated numbers provided in the list.

Country	*Estimated British Community 2003–04*
Canada	3,200,000
Australia	2,000,000
South Africa	820,000
USA	700,000
Spain	640,500
New Zealand	450,000
Irish Republic	300,000
France	300,000
Pakistan	205,000
Germany	156,106
United Arab Emirates	107,437
Netherlands	70,000
Italy	64,022
Cyprus	60,000
Israel	35,000
Portugal	32,207
Thailand	30,000
India	28,800
Greece	27,650
Belgium	27,000

Foreign Dignitaries (Gifts)

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the *(a)* amount spent, *(b)* name of the recipient and *(c)* item provided in respect of gifts for foreign dignitaries since 1997. [204455]

Mr. Straw: This information is not held centrally within my Department, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. Very few such gifts are in any event made.

General Affairs Council

Mr. Hood: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the outcome was of the General Affairs and External Relations Council held on 13 December; what the Government's stance was on the issues discussed, including its voting record; and if he will make a statement. [205281]

Mr. MacShane: The information is as follows:

Outcome of the 13 December 2004 General Affairs and External Relations Council

My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary, John Grant (UK Permanent Representative to the EU) and I represented the UK at the General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) in Brussels on 13 December.

Conclusions were agreed on: ESDP, Iran, Somalia, Sudan, Great Lakes, Ukraine, Afghanistan, Colombia and the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP).

General Affairs Session

Preparation for the 17 December European Council

The Council examined draft conclusions prepared by the Presidency for the European Council to be held in Brussels on 16–17 December, dealing in particular with the conclusion of membership negotiations with Bulgaria and Romania and the opening of negotiations with Turkey and Croatia. Work on the draft conclusions is likely to continue in the run-up to the European Council;

The main items that the European Council is due to discuss are as follows:

EU enlargement: decisions on the conclusion of membership negotiations with Bulgaria and Romania and on the opening of negotiations with Turkey and Croatia.

Terrorism: review of progress in the fight against terrorism;

EU financial framework for 2007–13: decision on principles and guidelines for further work aimed at enabling agreement on the new financial framework and related issues, including the system of own resources for the financing of the EU budget;

Justice and home affairs: EU Drugs Strategy 2005–2012;

External relations: a number of issues, including the Middle East Peace Process and Ukraine.

Annual Programme of the Council (2005)

The Council took note of the presentation by the incoming Luxembourg and United Kingdom presidencies of a draft operational programme of the Council for 2005. The document is the result of a negotiation between both countries and therefore reflects the UK's views, but is not a definitive statement of what the UK will take forward in the second half of the year. Rather it is intended as a flexible menu of issues likely to be pursued next year and will form the basis of discussions with UK stakeholders and others as the UK Presidency programme is refined. It was agreed without discussion. Copies will be made available in the Library of the House.

External Relations Session

Iran

The Council gave its full support for the negotiating process, which started on 13 December, on a long-term arrangement with Iran. This was in light of the IAEA's confirmation of full suspension of all enrichment-related and reprocessing activities by Tehran. The EU will resume negotiations with Iran on a draft Trade and Cooperation Agreement. As a member of the E3 (UK, Germany and France) the Government played a major part in negotiating Iran's decision to suspend fully all enrichment related and reprocessing activities. It welcomes the continued negotiations for long-term arrangements.

Ukraine

Over lunch, Ministers gave their full support to the work of High Representative Solana and the Lithuanian and Polish Presidents. The Council welcomed the political agreement reached in Ukraine on 8 December that together with the Supreme Court's ruling on 3 December paved the way for a free and fair rerun of the second round of presidential elections. The EU will contribute substantially to the OSCE international election observation mission. There will be a declaration at the European Council. The Government are pleased that the situation in Ukraine remains peaceful and that a solution was reached within Ukraine's legal framework. As the Foreign Secretary said in his statement to the House on 29 November, *Official Report*, column 359, the Government look forward to an outcome to the elections that reflects the will of the Ukrainian people.

China Arms Embargo

Over lunch, Ministers held an exchange of views concerning the EU arms embargo against China, following the 8 December EU-China Summit at which the EU had confirmed its political will to continue to work towards lifting the embargo.

The Government support the decision of the European Council in December 2003 to review the EU arms embargo on China. This review is on-going—it was last discussed by EU Foreign Ministers at the 22 November GAERC. The Government do not wish to exclude any options for the review, nor to pre-empt the conclusion of the review. The Government continue to implement the arms embargo as set out by the then Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the late Derek Fatchett, in his reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Gedling (Vernon Coaker) on 3 June 1998, *Official Report*, columns 240–41.

Middle East Peace Process

The Presidency noted that Ministers would return to the subject at the European Council. A Declaration will be agreed.

ENP

Ministers discussed the action plans set up within the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) for Israel, Jordan, Moldova, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority, Ukraine and Tunisia. The Council endorsed these seven action plans, which will now be forwarded to the relevant association or co-operation councils for implementation. Ukraine's action plan will be launched as soon as possible following the completion of free and fair presidential elections. The Government agree with this course of action.

Great Lakes

The Commission said Commissioner Michel would be visiting the region on 15–19 December. The agreed Conclusions expressed the Council's deep concern about reports of military operations by Rwandan armed forces in the DRC and condemned any threat to and violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the DRC. The Council underlined the importance of addressing the key problem of the ex-FAR/Interahamwe, which was undermining peace and security in the region and constituted a source of instability and a threat to the local population as well as an impediment to good neighbourly relations.

The Council stressed the importance of the continued transition process in the DRC, especially in the preparation of elections and in the implementation of the necessary reforms. It called upon all countries of the region to give the transition in the DRC all their support. The Government welcome the agreed conclusions. It is important that the international community speaks with one voice to dissuade Rwanda from any action contrary to international law. The current crisis highlights the need to resolve the problem of the ex-FAR/Interahamwe to prevent further crises, address Rwandan security concerns and prevent further human rights abuses in DRC.

Sudan

The Presidency drew attention to the deteriorating security and humanitarian situation in Darfur and reminded the Council that pressure needed to be maintained on all parties, both to improve the security situation and to facilitate the rapid conclusion of the North/South process. Conclusions were agreed. These noted the latest report of the UN Secretary-General to the UN Security Council and its concern about the deteriorating security and humanitarian situation in Darfur. The Council condemns attacks and other ceasefire violations by all parties in the Darfur conflict and urges them to respect the ceasefire agreements. The Council recalls its previous conclusions and underlines that the EU will continue to monitor the situation in Darfur and will consider to take appropriate measures which could include sanctions, against the Government of Sudan as well as the rebel groups, in accordance with the UN Security Council Resolution 1556 and 1564, if no tangible progress is achieved in this respect.

The Government remain gravely concerned by the latest report by the Secretary-General on Darfur. It highlights the need for continued EU political pressure on all the parties to abide by the two Abuja Protocols; it also underlines the need for increased logistical, technical and financial assistance to the AU, and for the AU to expedite deployment of its civilian police component. It welcomes the UN Workplan for 2005 for $1.5 billion for the whole of Sudan. The Government welcome any analysis on sanctions, should they become necessary.

AOB—EU/Africa Dialogue

The Council took note of a presentation by Portuguese Foreign Minster Monteiro on the question of a second Africa-Europe Summit (after the April 2000 Cairo Summit), following the exchange of views on that subject at the EU-African Union Ministerial Troika meeting in Addis Ababa on 6 December. The President noted that the issue would be further discussed under the incoming Luxembourg Presidency.

AOB—Libya

Italian Foreign Minister Fini brought to the Council's attention that in the context of an immigration mission to Libya, the Libyan authorities were willing to cooperate with the EU authorities. The Italians requested the use of the AENEAS programme (EU migration funding) to help the Libyans. The Presidency took note. The Government welcome the cooperation between Italy and Libya and Italy's request to extend the AENEAS programme to Libya.

AOB— Guinea Bissau

The Council heard an intervention by Portuguese Foreign Minister Monteiro on the situation in Guinea Bissau as well as on the question of the resumption of the budgetary support programme. On the latter issue, the Commission reaffirmed its readiness to explore possible solutions in order to enable aid to be resumed. The Government currently provide multilateral support through the UN, EU and international financial institutions.

Gibraltar

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the effects of the application of Justice and Home Affairs Title VI measures on Gibraltar's *(a)* constabulary, *(b)* local government powers and *(c)* armed forces facilities following the entry into force of the EU constitution. [207093]

Mr. MacShane: Under the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe, Gibraltar will be in the same position as the UK as regards the application of measures which can at present be adopted under Title VI of the TEU (i.e. measures on police and judicial cooperation in criminal matters). This was fully discussed with the Government of Gibraltar during the Intergovernmental Conference negotiations last year.

The effect of measures adopted under the Constitutional Treaty on Gibraltar's constabulary, local government powers and armed forces facilities will of course depend on the content of the measures in question. But the Government are confident that, as now, the interests of the UK and Gibraltar will be safeguarded.

Global Conflict Prevention Pool

Mr. Letwin: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the impact of *(a)* the Global Conflict Prevention Pool and *(b)* the Africa Pool. [205409]

Mr. Rammell: A major external Evaluation of the Pools by Bradford University's Department of Peace Studies, completed in March 2004, concluded that, although it is too soon to make an accurate assessment of impact, the Pools are funding worthwhile activities that make positive contributions to effective conflict prevention, and that the progress achieved through the Pools' mechanisms is significant enough to justify their continuation.

The evaluation also identified a number of areas where there appeared to be room for improvement. The Government has published a response to these issues. An overall assessment of the Pool's performance against their Spending Round 02 Public Service Agreement target was laid before Parliament on 14 December 2004 and is available on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office web site: http://www.fco.gov.uk/Files/kfile/ConflictPreventionPoolEvaluation.pdf

Great Lakes Region

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of the Amnesty International report "Protecting their rights: Rwandese Refugees in the Great Lakes Region"; and if he will make a statement. [206311]

Mr. Mullin: We note with interest Amnesty International's report published on 15 December. It makes a number of recommendations which we will study carefully.

Guantanamo Bay

Ms Abbott: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the meetings his Department has held with US officials to discuss the status of British nationals at Guantanamo Bay since 2002. [206225]

Mr. Mullin: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office and its missions in the US have a continuing programme of meetings with various US Government departments to discuss the status of British nationals. Among other issues, these meetings consider individual consular cases; the detainees at Guantanamo Bay; and changes to US immigration practice (such as biometrics and the US Visa Waiver Programme) that affect all British visitors to the USA.

Gym Provision

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many gyms are available to staff in the Department; and what the cost of providing them was in the last year for which figures are available. [204372]

Mr. Rammell: There are two gyms available for staff use on the UK Estate of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. One in London, and one at Hanslope Park. The cost of provision of this service, with the exception of utility costs, is wholly met from subscriptions charged to the users. Utilities for the gym areas are not currently separately metered, and it is therefore not possible to provide these costs.

The Overseas Foreign and Commonwealth Office locations all have the capability to make their own arrangements for provision of gym facilities. Due to the number of locations, the details for the overseas Estate could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Holy See

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the requirements for candidates sought as successor ambassador to the Holy See; and whether declared religion will be a factor. [207073]

Mr. MacShane: The successful candidate will possess the qualities we expect from a Head of Mission. Heads of Mission to the Holy See are appointed on merit and not on the basis of their religious beliefs.

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what plans he has to vary the *(a)* scale and *(b)* delivery of UK representation to the Holy See; and if he will make a statement. [207567]

Mr. MacShane: As announced in the written statement by my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary on 15 December 2004, *Official Report*, columns 137–40WS, we expect to widen the pool of potential candidates as Head of Mission to beyond the Foreign and Commonwealth Office when we look for a potential successor to the present incumbent next summer. We are currently in the process of determining the level and form of staffing necessary to preserve a viable and effective embassy which meets our requirements. There is no question, however, of closing down our embassy to the Holy See.

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he had with the Papal Nuncio prior to decisions being made to alter the UK's arrangements for diplomatic representation to the Holy See; and if he will make a statement. [207568]

Mr. MacShane: The Holy See has been kept informed of our proposals for future diplomatic representation as they have developed, through contacts with our embassy to the Holy See and the Papal Nuncio in London.

Indonesia (Defence Sales)

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what advice was given by *(a)* his Department, *(b)* the local diplomatic mission in Indonesia and *(c)* the commercial officer in Indonesia, to Alvis plc and Alvis Ltd. about the use of agents in connection with the sale of Scorpion and Stormer vehicles to Indonesia. [205690]

Mr. Rammell: The allegations relating to the sale of military equipment to the Indonesians in 1995–06 reported this month in *The Guardian* newspaper are currently being investigated in the UK and Indonesia. It would not be appropriate to comment on these investigations at this stage. Currently, no records have been found of any discussions with Alvis plc or Alvis Ltd. on agents either by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, or by the embassy in Jakarta.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs on what date his Department was informed of the decision by BAE Systems to use PTSK as agents in connection with the sale of Hawk jets to Indonesia. [205692]

Mr. Rammell: We have found no documents indicating who BAE Systems used as their agents in connection with the sale of Hawk jets to Indonesia. We are however looking into this matter further.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs on what date his Department was informed of the decision by Alvis to use *(a)* PT Truba and *(b)* PTSK as agents in connection with the sale of Scorpion and Stormer vehicles to Indonesia. [205693]

Mr. Rammell: The allegations relating to the sale of Scorpion tanks to the Indonesians in 1995–96 reported this month in *The Guardian* newspaper are currently being investigated in the UK and Indonesia. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has to date found no record of its being informed of specific agents for the contracts between Alvis and the Indonesian Government.

Iraq

Lembit Öpik: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many civilians have been killed as a result of paramilitary action by insurgents in Iraqi since April 2002. [204230]

Mr. Rammell: We have no way of reliably estimating the total number of Iraqi civilians killed by military or terrorist action. Unlike the Multi-National Force, the insurgents continue to deliberately target the Iraqi civilian population and cause damage to the country's infrastructure. Reports show that some 35 people, many of them children, were killed in one attack alone on 30 September, when co-ordinated bombs were detonated near a water treatment plant in Baghdad. The key to improving the lives of the Iraqi people will be to put down the insurgency.

Mrs. Mahon: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what plans the Government have to withdraw British troops from Iraq under the terms of UN Security Resolution No. 1546. [205382]

Mr. Rammell: The UK is committed to Iraq until the country is stabilised and the Iraqis themselves are able to take full responsibility for their own security. United Nations Security Council Resolution 1546, unanimously adopted on 8 June 2004, mandates the presence of the multinational force, of which the UK forms part, to be reviewed at the request of the Government of Iraq or 12 months from the date of the Resolution. The mandate shall expire upon the completion of the political process and will be terminated earlier if requested by the Government of Iraq.

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what estimate he has made of the proportion of known injuries to Iraqi civilians which have been caused by the actions of multinational forces since 1 May 2003. [205513]

Mr. Rammell: We have no reliable means of ascertaining the number of Iraqi civilians injured by military or terrorist action since 1 May 2003. However, the Iraqi Minister of Health reported on 29 October that his Ministry's figures, based on records from some 180 hospitals, show that between 5 April 2004 and 5 October 2004 15,517 Iraqi civilians were injured.

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what estimate he has made of the number of *(a)* Iraqis killed by Saddam Hussein's regime in the period from 1 July 2001 to 19 March 2003, *(b)* Iraqi civilians killed in the period 20 March 2003 to 30 June and *(c)* Iraqi civilians killed in the period 1 July to 13 December. [205516]

Mr. Rammell: On 22 July 2003 the United Nations Secretary-General reported to the Security Council that it was estimated that over the past three decades at least 290,000 Iraqis had disappeared in Iraq. The Iraqi Bureau of Missing Persons has registered over 1.3 million missing Iraqis. Some 270 mass graves have so far been reported from that period. There are no reliable or comprehensive figures for Iraqi civilian casualties for the periods requested. The Iraqi Minister of Health stated on 29 October 2004 that his Ministry's figures, based on records from some 180 hospitals, show that between 5 April 2004 and 5 October 2004, 3,853 Iraqi civilians were killed.

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what reports he has received from his United States counterpart in respect of the hunger strike by Saddam Hussein. [205517]

Mr. Rammell: A spokesman for the US military in Iraq has given an unequivocal denial of these allegations on behalf of the US authorities. Saddam Hussein is in the legal custody of the Iraqi authorities and the physical custody of the US authorities. Regular access is granted to the International Committee of the Red Cross.

IT Projects

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list his Department's IT projects in each year since 1997, broken down by *(a)* amount spent, *(b)* purpose, *(c)* cost of over-run and *(d)* time of over-run. [205791]

Mr. Rammell: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) has undertaken over a hundred IT projects since 1997, ranging in cost from a few thousand pounds to several millions, and in time from a few weeks to several years. There is no central record of historical cost/time information from which we could extract this information. Therefore we could not answer this question without incurring disproportionate cost. The FCO annual departmental report gives details of our major IT projects.

Kosovo

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he has taken to combat organised crime in Kosovo. [205896]

Mr. MacShane: The UK has taken a number of steps to fight organised crime in Kosovo, and in the Western Balkans region as a whole. The UK works closely with governments in the region, the UN mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and other international organisations to combat this threat.

Since 2002 we have committed over £2.4 million to initiatives in this field throughout the region. We have provided expertise and equipment to increase the effectiveness of the Kosovo Organised Crime Unit and are currently helping UNMIK to set up a financial intelligence unit to combat money laundering in Kosovo.

The UK has provided around 99 officers to UNMIK to assist with law enforcement there. We also contribute almost 20 per cent. of the funding to the EU's external assistance programme to the Western Balkans (the Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilisation (CARDS) programme. The programme is worth €4.6 billion for the period 2000–06. Of the €51.5 million allocated for Kosovo for 2004, €6.5 million (12.5 per cent.) is devoted to justice and home affairs issues.

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what co-operation his Department's officials in Kosovo have with representatives of the former Kosovo Liberation Army. [205897]

Mr. MacShane: Since the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) disbanded following NATO action in Kosovo in 1999, some of its former members have set up and joined new political parties. These parties have played prominent roles in subsequent governments and continue to do so. British officials in Kosovo continue to engage with representatives of these parties, and all parties that are committed to taking forward progress on standards and working towards a multi-ethnic Kosovo.

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs which areas of Kosovo remain polluted or contaminated as a result of the NATO military action in 1999; what plans there are to remove and remediate this contamination; what resources have been set aside to carry out this clean-up; and if he will make a statement on the future of Kosovo. [205900]

Mr. MacShane: Data on residual mines and other unexploded ordnance in Kosovo is supplied to us by the United Nations interim administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). At present there are 37 individual dangerous areas left to clear. These areas are mostly in the Dulje Pass close to the Prizren area or along the border with Albania. However, more contaminated areas are likely to be discovered as the population returns to areas which have not been occupied since the conflict.

Following NATO intervention in Kosovo to avert an immediate and overwhelming humanitarian disaster, the UK was the first country to have de-miners on the ground in Kosovo. The UK Government have spent over £10 million on de-mining activities in the Balkans, over £5 million of which was spent in 1999–2000 on de-mining in Kosovo. Their de-mining activities have included clearance of unexploded munitions such as cluster bomb submunitions but also cover residual mines and other unexploded ordnance laid (both in set minefields and scattered randomly) during the Serbian-Albanian conflict.

The UK Government provide funding to the HALO Trust which is one of the agencies involved in helping to clear the remaining mined areas that have been identified. UK Government funding is also provided to a Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC) capacity building project with Handicap International through the Global Conflict Prevention Pool. UNMIK has an Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) management team whose role is one of coordination, planning and management of the ongoing clearance by all the parties involved: KFOR, KPC and NGOs. The UNMIK EOD team is in effect the primary mine clearing authority.

There will be a formal review in mid 2005 of Kosovo's progress in meeting the standards laid down by the UN (Kosovo Standards Implementation Plan (KSIP)). If Kosovo has made the necessary progress, then a process will begin to determine its final status in accordance with UNSCR 1244 (1999). If progress is insufficient, then there will be another review at a later date.

Maldives

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with his European Union counterparts about the forthcoming election in the Maldives; and if he will make a statement. [205953]

Mr. Alexander: On 13 December EU Heads of Mission accredited to the Maldives released a statement on the Majlis elections scheduled for 31 December. The statement called for the Government of Maldives to ensure that the elections are free and fair, that those who wish to stand for election are permitted to do so and can campaign freely, that open public debate is an integral part of election campaigns and that state-owned resources are employed even-handedly in a way that does not advantage certain candidates over others. The EU Heads of Mission welcomed the Maldivian Government's invitation to the Commonwealth and South Asia Association for Regional Co-operation to send observer missions.

I met both the Maldivian ambassador to the UK and the Maldivian Foreign Minister recently to stress these points.

Marta Andreasen

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the Government's position on the maintenance in European Communities' employment of Marta Andreasen. [207090]

Mr. MacShane: The employment of individuals by EC institutions is a matter for the institutions concerned.

Moldova

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what position was taken by the UK at the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe meeting in Sofia on 6 to 7 December on the Russian occupation of part of Moldova; and if he will make a statement. [205376]

Mr. MacShane: The UK's position was set out in our statement at the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Ministerial in Sofia. We want Russia to fulfil commitments made when signing the Adapted Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty at the OSCE Summit in Istanbul in 1999. These commitments include the full withdrawal of arms and ammunition from Transnistria, or their destruction in situ, and the withdrawal of Russian forces.

The full text of the UK's statement is available on the OSCE website at http://www.osce.org/events/mc/bulgaria2004/documents/files/mc_1102435776_e.pdf.

Mozambique

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the recent parliamentary and presidential elections in Mozambique, with particular reference to the Renamo opposition party's claims of election fraud. [205904]

Mr. Mullin: Counting is continuing in Mozambique and no formal election results have yet been announced. We understand that Renamo's complaints have been passed to the electoral authorities for consideration. We are currently awaiting reports from both the EU's and Commonwealth's elections observers.

Newspapers/Periodicals

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the *(a)* newspapers and *(b)* periodicals taken by his Department in each year since 1997; and how much the Department spent on each in each year. [207649]

Mr. Straw: Expenditure is as follows (only combined figures are available prior to 2001):

£

	Expenditure	*Newspapers*	*Periodicals*
1997–98	489,895	—	—
1998–99	586,510	—	—
1999–2000	566,067	—	—
2000–01	588,078	—	—
2001–02	590,721	211,393	379,328
2002–03	608,401	244,838	363,563
2003–04	500,682	231,973	268,709

A current list of newspaper and periodical titles taken by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office has been placed in the Library of the House. Lists of titles from previous years are not available.

Palestinian Occupied Authority

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the human rights situation in the Palestinian Occupied Authority. [205905]

Mr. Rammell: We recognise Israel's right to take proportionate action to protect its citizens against the threat of terrorist attack. But it must act in accordance with international law. Excessive use of force, often resulting in civilian casualties, restrictions on freedom of movement and the destruction of Palestinian homes and agricultural land, only serve to fuel Palestinian anger and make a comprehensive settlement more difficult to achieve. We continue to raise our concerns with the Israelis and urge them to cease these practices. Most recently my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary raised this with Israeli Vice Prime Minister Olmert during his visit to the region on 24 November.

For its part, the Palestinian Authority (PA) also still has much to do to demonstrate its commitment to the human rights of both Israelis and Palestinians. We continue to urge the PA to take effective action against those who commit acts of terrorism.

Papua New Guinea

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with *(a)* Australia and *(b)* other Commonwealth counterparts about the situation in Papua New Guinea; and if he will make a statement. [205952]

Mr. Rammell: We maintain regular dialogue on this issue with Australia, via our High Commissions in Port Moresby and Canberra. We discussed Papua New Guinea (PNG) with other Commonwealth countries such as New Zealand, at last August's Pacific Islands Forum.

We will continue to support Australia's major programmes in PNG, especially their Enhanced Cooperation Programme, through timely inward and outward experts' visits, and through EU funding.

Rwanda

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of recent reports of Rwandan *(a)* backing of and *(b)* assistance to General Laurent Nkunda; and if he will make a statement. [206309]

Mr. Mullin: There have been allegations of Rwandan backing and assistance for Nkunda but no conclusive proof. The Rwandan Government denies the allegations.

Severance Grants

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the cost of the award of severance grants to European Communities' personnel over the last financial year, broken down by *(a)* reason for severance and *(b)* number in each category; whether any involved charges of criminal behaviour; and how many involved claims of whistleblowing. [207136]

Mr. MacShane: This information, given that it concerns employees of the EU institutions, would be held by those institutions. It is not held by the UK Government.

Somalia

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with *(a)* European Union and *(b)* United Nations counterparts on the situation in Somalia; and if he will make a statement. [205951]

Mr. Mullin: We are working very closely with our EU partners and the United Nations to set up a Transitional Federal Government for Somalia, acceptable to all factions, which can establish itself in Mogadishu and begin to restore peace and security throughout Somalia. We continue to work closely with our international partners on the delivery of development assistance and humanitarian aid.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the contracts signed by his special advisers differ from the Model Contract for Special Advisers. [207240]

Mr. Straw: No.

Telephone Numbers

Mr. Tyler: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many non-geographic 0870 telephone numbers are in use by his Department; and what services can be accessed by calling each of them. [205829]

Mr. Rammell: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office does not make use of 0870 telephone numbers. There is an 0845 number in use. This enables members of the public to call the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in London from anywhere in the United Kingdom at standard local rates.

Mr. Tyler: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much revenue his Department has received from the use of non-geographic 0870 telephone numbers for the period 1 October 2003 to 30 September 2004. [205841]

Mr. Rammell: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office does not make use of 0870 telephone numbers, nor any other high revenue telephone numbers. There is an 0845 telephone number in use which enables members of the public to call the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in London from anywhere in the United Kingdom. Calls are charged at standard local rates, and there is no revenue generated for the Government.

Turkey (EU Membership)

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether Turkey will be required officially to recognise the existence of the Republic of Cyprus before it is granted membership of the European Union. [207207]

Mr. MacShane: As accession negotiations with Turkey progress, we expect that relations between Turkey and the Republic of Cyprus will undergo a gradual process of normalisation. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary and I have made it clear that a situation in which there are two member states of the EU who do not recognise each other is unthinkable.

Uganda

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of the role of the Ugandan

Government Communication Director, Mr. Ofwono-Opondo, in the public execution of Geoffrey Lubega; what representations *(a)* he, *(b)* members of his Department and *(c)* representatives of the UK Government have made to (i) members and (ii) representatives of the Ugandan Government concerning this issue; and if he will make a statement. [206014]

Mr. Mullin: We are aware of the reports of this incident. We understand that the Ugandan Prime Minister Apolo Nsibambi directed the Internal Affairs Minister Ruhakana Rugunda to investigate it, and the involvement of the Director of Information at the Movement Secretariat and report back to the Ugandan Parliament. Rugunda told Parliament in a statement on 21 September that Opondo had acted properly and in self-defence, and had saved lives by his actions.

We have urged the Ugandan Government to remain committed to the human rights principles enshrined in the constitution and we will continue to do so.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions *(a)* he, *(b)* members of his Department and *(c)* representatives of the UK Government have had with (i) members and (ii) representatives of the Ugandan Government regarding President Museveni's policy on social and political problems in Zimbabwe; what assessment he had made of President Museveni's view of the UK's role in Zimbabwe's development; and if he will make a statement. [206015]

Mr. Mullin: Our High Commissioner in Kampala discussed President Museveni's visit to Zimbabwe with him on 15 November. He expressed our disappointment at the comments made by the Ugandan President while on his visit.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions *(a)* he, *(b)* members of his Department and *(c)* representatives of the UK Government have had with (i) members and (ii) representatives of the Ugandan Government regarding reports of payments to members of Parliament in Uganda for their support of the proposed constitutional amendment to remove the two-term presidential limit; what reports he has received of such actions taking place; and if he will make a statement. [206016]

Mr. Mullin: We are concerned by reports that members of Uganda's Parliament are alleged to have received payments in order to secure their support for proposals to amend the Ugandan constitution.

Our High Commissioner in Kampala raised our concerns with the Ugandan Government on 1 November. We will continue to urge that the process of political change on which Uganda is embarking should follow the provisions of the constitution, uphold the rule of law and institutions of governance and be free from physical intimidation or financial manipulation.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations *(a)* he, *(b)* members of his Department and *(c)* representatives of the UK Government have made to (i) members and (ii) representatives of the Government of Uganda regarding reports of public flogging incidents in Uganda, with particular reference to reported incidents involving four opposition Members of Parliament; and if he will make a statement. [206017]

Mr. Mullin: None. An internal investigation was undertaken and a report submitted to the Parliament of Uganda, which is now carrying out its own investigation.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions *(a)* he, *(b)* members of his Department and *(c)* representatives of the UK Government have had with (i) their counterparts in the Commonwealth, (ii) their counterparts in the European Union member states and (iii) members of the European Commission regarding the provision of projects aimed at capacity building in the Ugandan political opposition; and if he will make a statement. [206019]

Mr. Mullin: The UK is an active member of the Kampala-based Donor Democracy and Governance Group, which co-ordinates international support for the political transition in Uganda. This includes the US, United Nations Development Programme, Norway and Japan, as well as EU member states and the European Commission.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office is also currently funding a project to help build capacity in all Uganda's major political parties as they prepare for the 2006 elections.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of the impact on the culture of political opposition in Uganda of the 1986 ban on political activities; and if he will make a statement. [206020]

Mr. Mullin: Since 1986, the "no-party" Movement system has banned activities by political parties. Initially the system promoted social cohesion and introduced significant local democracy based on 'individual merit'. But its continuation has inhibited democratic development.

We have continuously encouraged the Government of Uganda to open up political space.

We therefore welcomed President Museveni's call in March 2003 for this to occur in time for the next election in 2006. A White Paper proposing numerous changes to the constitution, including moving to a multi-party system and removing the limit on presidential terms, will be debated in the Ugandan Parliament shortly.

We hope that these changes will be handled in line with the provisions of the constitution through a process that carries the confidence of the Ugandan people and Parliament, and will enable the necessary legal amendments for a multi-party system to be enacted sufficiently in advance of the 2006 elections.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations *(a)* he, *(b)* members of his Department and *(c)* representatives of the UK Government have made to the Ugandan authorities regarding reports of President Museveni publicly supporting President

Robert Mugabe's land policies and blaming the UK for the land problems in Zimbabwe; and if he will make a statement. [206021]

Mr. Mullin: Our high commissioner in Uganda met with President Museveni on 15 November and made clear the Government's views on land reform in Zimbabwe. He also expressed our disappointment at the comments made by the Ugandan President while on his visit to Zimbabwe.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions *(a)* he, *(b)* members of his Department and *(c)* representatives of the UK Government have had with (i) members and (ii) representatives of the Government of Uganda regarding reported arrests and detentions on treason charges by the Chieftaincy of Military Intelligence; what clarifications have been (A) sought and (B) received in this respect; and if he will make a statement. [206320]

Mr. Mullin: Our High Commissioner has raised these issues with the Minister of the Interior. He stressed the importance of the Government of Uganda arresting suspects, detaining them, charging them and bringing them to court within the provisions set by law. The Minister has provided assurances that the rule of law will be upheld.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions *(a)* he, *(b)* members of his Department and *(c)* representatives of the UK Government have had with (i) members and (ii) representatives of the Government of Uganda regarding (A) the human treason law in general and (B) the time required under the human treason law before bail can be applied for; and if he will make a statement. [206321]

Mr. Mullin: We are concerned by reports of the treason law being used for political purposes. We regularly raise issues of good governance and human rights abuses with the Ugandan authorities, along with our EU partners.

We will continue to urge the Ugandans to comply with the provisions of the constitution and uphold the rule of law.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of the circumstances of the death of Patrick Mamenero in Uganda in 2002; what discussions *(a)* he, *(b)* members of his Department and *(c)* representatives of the UK Government have had with (i) members and (ii) representatives of the Government of Uganda with regard to (A) the detention by the Chieftaincy of Military Intelligence and (B) the death while in detention of Patrick Mamenero in Uganda in 2002; and if he will make a statement. [206322]

Mr. Mullin: We are aware of the reports of Patrick Mamenero's death. We are concerned by evidence of arbitrary arrests and lack of due legal process in Uganda, and we take seriously reports of human rights abuses.

The British High Commission in Kampala is an active member of the Donor Technical Group's Human Rights Working Group. This Working Group supports the Uganda Human Rights Commission in its interventions with the security agencies, including the Chieftancy of Military Intelligence, over alleged incidents of torture and illegal detention.

The Human Rights Working Group will monitor a new initiative by the Director of Public Prosecutions and top security chiefs to eliminate torture, and keep an inventory of follow-up recommendations for further action.

Ukraine

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the recent elections in Ukraine. [205748]

Mr. MacShane: As my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary stated in the House on 29 November, *Official Report*, column 359, "the international election observer mission led by the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) has concluded that the presidential elections held in Ukraine on 21 November were flawed. On that basis, we cannot accept that the process was either free or fair."

We welcome developments in Ukraine since then. The Rada (Parliament) voted on 8 December to amend the constitution and election law. Together with the Supreme Court's earlier decision to invalidate the second round of the election, and the appointment of a new Central Election Committee, this has effectively resolved the political crisis.

We now look forward to the re-run of the election on 26 December, and are calling on all parties to ensure that this will be free and fair and reflect the will of the people. It is vital that the Ukrainian authorities work closely with the OSCE to guarantee this. We will support the OSCE's efforts and plan to contribute at least 100 election observers.

Uzbekistan

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Government of Uzbekistan about *(a)* freedom of the media, *(b)* freedom of religion, *(c)* freedom of speech and *(d)* freedom of assembly. [205262]

Mr. Rammell: We regularly stress to the Uzbek Government the importance of the freedom of the media. In November we, together with our EU partners, drew the attention of Foreign Minister Safayev to the importance of open debate in the media on the merits and drawbacks of the electoral law and process, including a role for the views of opposition parties.

We frequently lobby the Uzbek Government with respect to religious freedom and it is a constant feature of our bilateral dialogue. On 19 October our Charge d'Affaires met with Deputy Foreign Minister Norov to underline the importance of drawing distinctions between those practising religion outside state structures and religious extremists. At a further meeting on 1 December, Norov informed our Charge d'Affaires that Uzbekistan had begun to experiment with a religious curriculum in the Tashkent area. A delegation from Uzbekistan, including the Presidential Adviser on

Religious Affairs, came to the UK in July 2004. We plan to follow up these contacts with substantive proposals. A follow up seminar is planned for 2005.

In November we joined our EU partners in expressing our concerns to Foreign Minister Safayev about the forthcoming elections and the limited choice available to voters. Candidates and parties should be free to present political alternatives to the electorate. In a letter to Safayev dated 23 November, my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary stressed the importance of allowing NGOs to speak freely, saying "the activities of civil society groups such as Human Rights Watch are an important part of a healthy democracy".

On 10 December our Charge d'Affaires approached the Foreign Ministry regarding an earlier demonstration outside our embassy. He sought clarification of reports that protesters had been held, and said that if people had been detained for wishing to participate in a peaceful protest we would be concerned and would expect them to be released quickly.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what estimate he has made of the growth in gross domestic product in Uzbekistan in 2003. [205263]

Mr. Rammell: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office does not estimate GDP growth in Uzbekistan, instead relying upon the data from the Uzbek authorities and other International Financial Institutions. The Uzbek authorities' estimate for real GDP growth in 2003 is 4.4 per cent. However, the World Economic Outlook (WHO) database gives a figure of 1.5 per cent. This database can be found at WEO@imf.org.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what proportion of industrial production in Uzbekistan is accounted for by the cotton crop. [205264]

Mr. Rammell: We have not been able to obtain any figures from the Uzbek Government. However, the latest Economist Intelligence Unit Country Report gives the cotton crop as 3.53 million tonnes for 2004 (a 20 per cent. year on year increase) and as accounting for nearly 20 per cent. of total exports in 1993.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what proportion of industrial production in Uzbekistan is accounted for by gold. [205265]

Mr. Rammell: The Uzbek Government does not publish figures on gold production.

Gold mined last year is estimated to be around 86 tonnes compared to an annual average of around 70 tonnes in the early 1990s. According to the Economist Intelligence Unit this month, gold probably contributes to around 10–15 per cent. of the country's total export revenue.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the level of *(a)* inflation, *(b)* unemployment, *(c)* money supply growth per annum, *(d)* per capita income and *(e)* annual average earnings growth are in Uzbekistan. [205266]

Mr. Rammell: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) relies on economic data from the Uzbek authorities and other international financial institutions. Because Uzbekistan does not allow public release of these reports, we are not able to quote IMF figures. Caution is advised with the official figures, which may not provide a wholly accurate representation of the state of Uzbekistan's economy.

(a) Official sources give the rate of inflation as 3.8 per cent.

(b) The official unemployment rate is given as 0.4 per cent. as of 1 July 2004.

(c) Official sources: preliminary data for 2003 gives a 36.3 per cent. growth in Broad Money (deposits at commercial banks, savings etc).

(d) Official figures give 387 sum (approx. $39) in 2003. Economist Intelligence Unit gives the 2002 average monthly wage as $40.50.

(e) Official sources give the annual average earnings growth for the first half of 2004 as a 17 per cent. increase over the first half of 2003. For 2003 the increase was 12.3 per cent. compared to the previous year.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with President Karimov of Uzbekistan about human rights abuses in the country. [205269]

Mr. Rammell: We have had no recent discussions with President Karimov about human rights abuses in Uzbekistan.

However, we regularly and repeatedly bring our concern about the human rights situation in Uzbekistan to senior level attention within the Uzbek Government. We have done this in Ministerial and official contacts and together with EU partners.

Most recently, we discussed these issues with Deputy Foreign Minister Norov on 1 December 2004.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Government of Uzbekistan about the destruction of bridges in the Ferghana Valley. [205270]

Mr. Rammell: No representations have been made. The destruction of bridges in the Ferghana Valley impact upon trade with neighbouring countries and the outflows of hard currency.

We continue to be concerned by Uzbekistan's protectionist economic policy. During his meeting with Deputy Prime Minister Ganiev earlier this year, my hon. Friend the then Minister of State for Trade and Investment, Mike O'Brien, said that it was essential for Uzbekistan to implement economic reform in line with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development benchmarks.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to President Karimov of Uzbekistan about *(a)* the extension of his term of office and *(b)* the prohibition of Erk, Birlik and the free farmers from contesting parliamentary elections this month. [205271]

Mr. Rammell: We have not made any direct representations to President Karimov regarding an extension of his current term in office. His second official term in office is due to finish in 2007. Chapter 19, Article 90 of the constitution of the Republic of

Uzbekistan states that "One and the same person may not be the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan for more than two consecutive terms".

We were very disappointed to learn that no opposition political parties had achieved registration in Uzbekistan for the parliamentary elections this December. We have lobbied and will continue to lobby the Uzbek authorities on the registration of political parties in the run-up to the elections. This issue was raised most recently on 11 November by our Charges d'Affaires and other EU Heads of Mission with Foreign Minister Safayev.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the use by the Government of Uzbekistan of *(a)* increased tariffs and *(b)* non-tariff barriers in the form of certification and safety procedures and Uzbek language labelling. [205272]

Mr. Rammell: The Uzbek Government continues to employ a protectionist economic policy. Trade controls such as tariffs, together with non-tariff barriers, limit the imports of consumer goods, enabling the Government to retain hard currency and follow its policy of building up a protected domestic industrial sector.

Trade restrictions have adverse effects on the economy, relations with neighbours and on ordinary Uzbeks. Tariffs are prohibitive for traders and we believe widespread smuggling and bribery are direct consequences.

We continue to urge the Uzbek Government towards economic reform. In a meeting with Deputy Prime Minister Ganiev earlier this year, my hon. Friend the then Minister of State for Trade and Investment, Mike O'Brien, said that it was essential that the Government of Uzbekistan demonstrate its commitment to implementing economic reforms in line with the European Bank of Reconstruction and Development benchmarks.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the levels of foreign direct investment in Uzbekistan from *(a)* the United States, *(b)* Japan, *(c)* the European Union and *(d)* the United Kingdom. [205273]

Mr. Rammell: The figures requested are not publicly available. The Economist Intelligence Unit December 2004 report estimates that inflows of foreign direct investment are estimated to have increased slightly over the past two years, to an annual average of just below $170 million.

The World Bank records $70 million for 2003 and $101 million for the first nine months of 2004.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Government of Uzbekistan about the expulsion of the Open Society Institute from Tashkent. [205274]

Mr. Rammell: We were very concerned to learn of the refusal of the Ministry of Justice to re-register the Open Society Institute in April.

The EU raised this with the Uzbek Government at senior ministerial level in a démarche, which was delivered by the UK as acting presidency in Tashkent. We are still pressing for an official response.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what work has been undertaken by the Westminster Foundation for Democracy with members of the Democratic Forum in Uzbekistan. [205276]

Mr. Rammell: I know of no work undertaken by the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD) with members of the Democratic Forum in Uzbekistan.

However, our embassy in Tashkent frequently maintains links with independent political parties and has brought the WFD to the attention of the Democratic Forum. Together with our EU partners, we have lobbied in support of registration for the political parties that belong to the Democratic Forum throughout 2004.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the claim made by Mr. Craig Murray in his speech to Chatham House on 8 November, that a British businessman this year had his assets awarded by an Uzbek court to an Uzbek former partner who had already been paid for his share. [205319]

Mr. Rammell: We have followed developments in the case referred to in the hon. Member's question. We were concerned by the initial ruling on the case by the Tashkent City court.

We have since heard that the Supreme Court has annulled the findings of the City Court on the grounds that new information has come to light. The Supreme Court has instructed the City Court to review the cases, taking into account the new evidence. We shall continue to monitor the case closely.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the claim made by Mr Craig Murray in his speech to Chatham House on 8 November, that a UK company had its share in a joint enterprise with an Uzbek state entity reduced in a court case of which it had not been informed. [205320]

Mr. Rammell: We believe the hon. Member's question refers to the case of a British company which established a joint venture company in 1993 with Uzbek partners.

In October 2002 a dispute over the share of the assets was brought before an Uzbek court. Our understanding is that the court reduced the British partner's share to 40 per cent. and increased the Uzbek side's holding to 60 per cent.. According to the British partner, no consideration was given to the clause in the joint venture which stated that disputes should be settled by arbitration. The British company was advised it could protest formally to the Prosecutor's Office which it did at the end of October 2002. It has received no reply.

We have followed this case with concern. In September 2004 the Co-Chairman of the Uzbek-British Trade and Industry Council brought it to the attention of Deputy Prime Minister Ganiev.

Venezuela

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Government of Venezuela following the signing of the Media Content Law; and what assessment he has made of the law's impact on freedom of expression in Venezuela. [205909]

Mr. Rammell: During an official visit to Venezuela on 13 December, I raised concerns over certain aspects of the media law in meetings with the Venezuelan Vice-President and Deputy Foreign Minister. I said that I doubted the law was helpful in encouraging reconciliation between the government and the opposition.

Although the media law is targeted to improve the quality of media in Venezuela, we are concerned that the law will place restrictions on the content of broadcasts. There is a risk that this will threaten the freedom of expression that currently exists in Venezuela.

We will continue to assess the impact of the law and will continue to make representations to the Venezuelan Government on this and other human rights and democracy issues as necessary.

West Papua

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make it his policy to urge the Secretary-General of the United Nations to review the UN's conduct in relation to the 1969 Act of Free Choice in West Papua. [205883]

Mr. Alexander: The report of the UN Special Representative of the UN backed "1969 Act of Free Choice" which resulted in West Papua becoming a province of Indonesia was accepted by a majority vote of the UN in 1969. The British Government welcome the high priority that President Yudhoyono has attached to the resolution of the conflict in Papua and his intention to implement the 2001 Special Autonomy Law for Papua, which includes the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Committee to look at the incorporation of Papua into Indonesia in the 1960s.

Whistleblowers

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the Government's policy on the maintenance in European Communities' employment of named whistleblowers. [207110]

Mr. MacShane: The Government's policy on the continued employment of whistleblowers is that whistleblowers should be protected from detriment resulting from disclosures which they make in accordance with the proper procedures. This is the position that we have provided for in the UK, in the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998. The European Communities' Staff Regulations provide for a similar level of protection for EC employees, who may use a number of channels to express their concerns and have them investigated, without fear of reprisal.

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many whistle blowing cases there have been within European institutions in the past 30 years; which institutions have been involved in such cases; and what the employment status is of each individual concerned. [207255]

Mr. MacShane: This is a matter for the institutions concerned. The information is not held by the Government.

World Trade Organisation (Accession)

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the proposed accession to the World Trade Organisation of *(a)* Afghanistan, *(b)* Iraq and *(c)* Iran. [205910]

Mr. MacShane: World Trade Organisation (WTO) Members discussed on 13 December requests from Afghanistan, Iraq and Iran to begin the process of acceding to the WTO. The European Commission, which negotiates on our behalf in the WTO, supported all three applications.

Accession requests can only go forward with the unanimous agreement of all WTO Members. All agreed to the requests of Afghanistan and Iraq, and these countries will now begin the formal accession process which is likely to last some years. I welcome this development, which is a step forward in helping Afghanistan and Iraq to develop their economies and integrate into the global economic system.

Iran's application has been under consideration for several years. In the meeting on 13 December, the European Commission, acting for the EU, spoke strongly in favour of opening accession negotiations. We actively supported this approach, in line with an undertaking in the 'E3' (UK, French and German) agreement with Iran on 15 November. However, as on previous occasions, Iran's application did not secure the required support of all WTO members.

Zimbabwe

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with *(a)* European Union and *(b)* Commonwealth counterparts on the forthcoming parliamentary elections in Zimbabwe; and if he will make a statement. [205906]

Mr. Mullin: We and our EU partners regularly remind the Zimbabwean Government and its neighbours of the need for Zimbabwe to fully comply with African Union and Southern African Development Community protocols for democratic elections. A number of Commonwealth countries have done likewise.

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with *(a)* European Union and *(b)* Commonwealth counterparts on the likely effect of Zimbabwe's new Non-Governmental Organisations Act on democracy groups in Zimbabwe; and if he will make a statement. [205950]

Mr. Mullin: We and our EU partners have made clear to the Zimbabwean Government and its neighbours our concerns about the Bill. The UN Development Programme office in Harare has also told the

Zimbabwean Government that the Act breaches various UN and other international treaties to which the Zimbabwean Government is a party. Fellow members of the Commonwealth have made clear they share our concerns.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Arts Council (Theatre)

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what revenue support has been given by Arts Council England for theatrical activity in each of the last three years for which data is available for projects in *(a)* Staffordshire, *(b)* Derbyshire, *(c)* Cheshire, *(d)* Warwickshire, *(e)* Herefordshire and *(f)* Worcestershire. [205240]

Estelle Morris: The data available is contained in the following table:

£

County	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
(a) Staffordshire	696,771	844,665	865,781
(b) Derbyshire	454,360	701,070	718,597
(c) Cheshire	325,391	438,407	449,372
(d) Warwickshire	247,552	304,979	405,603
(e) Herefordshire	48,575	155,033	158,909
(f) Worcestershire	42,782	63,767	65,361

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport whether Arts Council England has a strategic plan for the support of theatrical work in specified counties or regions; and if she will make a statement. [205241]

Estelle Morris: In July 2000 the Arts Council of England (now Arts Council England) published the National Policy for Theatre in England, which covers the whole country. In the same month, the Arts Council secured an extra £100 million of Government funding for arts from 2003–04.

£25 million of this new money was allocated to theatre annually from 2003–04 in order to implement the National Policy for Theatre in England. This represented a 72 per cent. increase in the budget for regional theatre.

The National Policy for Theatre has been an overwhelming success and the additional investment has had a tangible impact on the regional theatre sector which is currently thriving.

More new writing has been commissioned, ticket sales are up, there are more new productions, bigger cast sizes, more work with young people, more Black theatre and more adventurous programming than ever before.

Coliseum Concert Hall, Watford

Claire Ward: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will discuss with the Eastern Region Arts Council possible assistance to ensure that the Coliseum concert hall in Watford remains open. [207609]

Estelle Morris: The Department does not fund the arts directly, but through Arts Council England and individual decisions are taken at 'arm's length' from Government. Ministers have no direct influence on the funding of individual art forms or organisations.

Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment

Richard Ottaway: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the criteria for appointment to the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment are; and what guidelines have been drawn up to prevent conflicts of interest. [206081]

Mr. Caborn: The criteria for each appointment to the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) depend on the particular role specification for each vacancy. To ensure that CABE is a credible organisation, it needs to include representatives in a number of fields including design, landscape architecture, architecture and property. Vacancies on the Board of CABE are publicised, as a minimum, on the Department for Culture, Media and Sport's (DCMS) website and the Cabinet Office website. The application pack includes a copy of the role and person specification for the post and DCMS's guidance 'Probity and Conflicts of Interest—a guide for candidates'.

Following an independent audit of CABE and DCMS's own review of public appointments processes earlier this year, procedures for identifying, declaring and disposing of or managing interests so that actual or perceived conflicts are avoided were strengthened.

All shortlisted candidates are asked about potential conflicts of interest during the interview. Prior to appointment, detailed discussions with the successful candidate take place and an exchange of letters, documents, any agreed arrangements. Before re-appointment, the register of interests is reviewed and updated.

In the case of serving Commissioners, advisers and staff, CABE has its own guidance note on 'Managing Conflicts of Interest'.

Departmental Credit Cards

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many credit cards for official expenditure are held by her Department. [206444]

Mr. Caborn: My Department holds 43 credit cards to be used for official expenditure.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the cost of travel within the UK for the Department was in each year since 1997; and how much of this was spent on *(a)* hire cars, *(b)* helicopter hire, *(c)* hotel accommodation and *(d)* subsistence. [206480]

Mr. Caborn: The following table shows departmental expenditure by Ministers and civil servants on UK travel and subsistence. An analysis by type of expenditure is not recorded on the Department's accounting system and can be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

All official travel complied with the requirements of the Ministerial Code, Travel by Ministers and the Civil Service Management Code, copies of which are available in the Libraries of the House.

Financial year	*UK T&S (£)*
2004–05[1]	368,139.99
2003–04	596,563.42
2002–03	633,040.59
2001–02	582,966.53
2000–01	536,366.30
1999–2000	502,258.11
1998–99	429,482.14
1997–98	373,363.70

[1] To 16 December 2004.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much the Department spent on first-class travel in each year since 1997. [206565]

Mr. Caborn: An analysis of expenditure on first class travel is not recorded on the Department's accounting system and can only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

All official travel complied with the requirements of the Ministerial Code, Travel by Ministers and the Civil Service Management Code, copies of which are available in the Libraries of the House.

Information relating to overseas travel by Ministers is published on an annual basis. Information for the period 2 May 1997 to 31 March 2004 is available in the Library of the House. Information for the financial year 2004–05 will be published as soon as possible at the end of the current financial year.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sporthow many overseas trips, and at what total cost, have been made by her Department in each year since 1997; and what the costs of *(a)* flights, *(b)* internal travel, *(c)* hotel accommodation and *(d)* subsistence were of each trip. [206649]

Mr. Caborn: The following table shows departmental expenditure by Ministers and civil servants on overseas travel and subsistence. An analysis by type of expenditure is not recorded on the Department's accounting system and can be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

All official travel complied with the requirements of the Ministerial Code, Travel by Ministers and the Civil Service Management Code, copies of which are available in the Libraries of the House.

Information relating to overseas travel by Ministers is published on an annual basis. Information for the period 2 May 1997 to 31 March 2004 is available in the Library of the House. Information for the financial year 2004–05 will be published as soon as possible at the end of the current financial year.

Financial year	*Overseas (£)*
2004–05[1]	220,177.12
2003–04	337,094.77
2002–03	243,596.37
2001–02	167,626.85
2000–01	275,649.23
1999–2000	253,171.21
1998–99	213,801.36
1997–98	209,200.71

[1] To 16 December 2004

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the running costs of the Department were in each year since 1997, broken down by *(a)* electricity, *(b)* water, *(c)* gas, *(d)* telephones, *(e)* mobile telephones and *(f)* televisions. [206668]

Mr. Caborn: Details of expenditure are not held at that level for the years prior to 2000. The periods recorded are financial years.

Running Costs

£000

	Electricity	*Water*	*Gas*	*Telephones*[1]	*Televisions*
2000	283,931	3,106	58,532	357,000	No Record
2001	273,750	3,061	58,784	260,000	14,981
2002	276,019	3,100	59,503	302,000	15,684
2003	253,616	2,696	52,015	236,000	15,872

[1] included in the cost of telephones

Departmental Properties

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many properties are held by the Department; what total floor space these properties provide; how many properties are vacant; and how much floor space vacant properties comprise. [206497]

Mr. Caborn: Four properties with a total net internal floor space of 10,557.94 sqare metres are held on leases. There are no vacant properties and no vacant floor space.

Documents

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what her Department's policy is in relation to the storage of documents and the use of shredders; and whether this policy has been reviewed in the past 12 months. [206749]

Mr. Caborn: The Department for Culture, Media and Sport's records management policy ensures that records are stored securely and held no longer than necessary as required by the Public Records Act. Where information is no longer required and is to be destroyed, shredders are used for the disposal of confidential material. There has been no change to this policy in the last 12 months.

Drug Taking in Sport

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on the effect of Court of First Instance case T-313/02, as detailed in OJ C300 volume 47 of 4 December, on European Union measures against drug taking in sport. [207145]

Mr. Caborn: Primary responsibility for anti-doping policy currently rests with sport and Governments at member state level. The Government welcomes the judgment of the Court of First Instance that the International Olympic Committee anti-doping measures do not pursue any economic objective and are intended to preserve the spirit of fair play as well as the health of the athletes. This judgment reinforces the capacity of sport and national Governments to pursue an effective anti-doping policy.

Electronic Devices

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many electronic devices are owned by the Department, broken down by type. [207673]

Mr. Caborn: My Department owns 1,483 devices listed as follows:

712—PCs
31—Communication devices (including modems)
5—Data Converters
3—Digital senders
4—External CD drives
1—Fingerprint reader
7—Switch boxes
22—Microwave ovens
4—Multifunction fax/printer/scanner
32—Hubs
115—PDAs
106—Notebooks
163—Printers
8—Projectors
11—Routers
12—Scanners
78—Servers
2—Speakers
6—Tape drives
6—Temperature monitors
136—Remote access security devices
17—Uninterrupted power supply units
2—Videoconferencing suites

E-mails

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what her Department's policy is in relation to the storage and deletion of e-mails; and whether this policy has been reviewed in the past 12 months. [206748]

Mr. Caborn: The Department for Culture, Media and Sport's electronic information management policy ensures that information deemed to be a record (under the Public Records Act) is captured and stored, this includes e-mails. The policy further provides that e-mails older than 12 months are to be deleted from electronic e-mail folders unless they are deemed to be a record and are to be stored. This policy was introduced in June 2004.

Entertainment Costs

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much has been spent on entertainment by her Department in each year since 1997, broken down by *(a)* food, *(b)* alcohol, *(c)* staff and *(d)* accommodation. [204345]

Mr. Caborn: All expenditure on official entertainment is made in accordance with published departmental guidance on financial procedures and propriety, based on principles set out in Government Accounting.

The following table shows expenditure on entertainment, including working breakfasts or lunches, refreshment at meetings and official entertainment, by the Department since 1997–98. In 2002–03 changes were made in the way entertainment expenditure was captured to include associated staff costs following the contracting out of the hospitality service. The Department's accounting system does not record information by the categories requested and it can only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Financial year	*Expenditure(£)*
1997–98	15,269.81
1998–99	24,496.51
1999–2000	33,359.78
2000–01	51,666.75
2001–02	32,586.56
2002–03	87,150.29
2003–04	90,007.37
2004–05 (to December 2004)	61,270.90

International Cricket Council Headquarters

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what discussions she has had with *(a)* the England and Wales Cricket Board, *(b)* the MCC, *(c)* UK Sport, *(d)* Sport England and *(e)* the International Cricket Council (ICC) on the location of the ICC headquarters; and what the outcome was in each case. [205929]

Mr. Caborn *[holding answer 20 December 2004]:* I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 1 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 167W.

Following their discussions with my Department, UK Sport submitted a proposal to the Chancellor. The Paymaster General, as Minister responsible, responded to UK Sport by letter on 15 November 2004.

I am not aware that my Department has had any discussions on this subject with the MCC or Sport England. However, a DCMS official accompanied representatives of UK Sport to a meeting with the ICC on 27 July, where the issue of the ICC's possible relocation was discussed.

IT Projects

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will list her Department's IT projects in each year since 1997, broken down by *(a)* amount spent, *(b)* purpose, *(c)* cost of over-run and *(d)* time of over-run. [205778]

Mr. Caborn: The information for IT projects in the current financial year is as follows:

Internal network addressing reconfiguration

£28,000, changes to the Department's internal [illegible]net Protocol (TCP/IP) network addressing st[illegible]ure, no over-run, no over-run.

Server consolidation programme

£43,000, reducing ad hoc server numbers and replacing with dedicated servers, delivered below budget saving £7,000, no over-run.

Online form for Export Licensing

£35,000, allowing commercial exporters to submit applications for export licences online, £5,000 over-run, one month.

BBC Charter Review Database

£32,000, tracking responses to BBC Charter Review consultation exercise, delivered below budget saving £2,000, no over-run.

Gambling Bill Consultation Database

£10,000, system to track responses to Gambling Bill consultation exercise, delivered below budget saving £7,000, no over-run.

Research Information Database

£13,000, provide a repository for research information held by the Department, £2,000 over-run, one week.

Development of FoI Correspondence Management System

£560,000, system to manage all correspondence including FoI requests, no over-run, no over-run.

It is not possible to provide the information for previous years save at disproportionate cost.

Licensing

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what guidance she has issued to local authorities on the membership of local authority licensing committees, sub-committees and panels established under the Licensing Act 2003; and if she will make a statement. [206795]

Mr. Caborn: In July 2004 we issued guidance to licensing authorities under s 182 of the Licensing Act 2003. Chapter 3 included advice on administration, exercise and delegation of functions. In addition, we have recently completed a public consultation on regulations and an order under the 2003 Act, including those relating to hearings procedures. We do not currently intend to prescribe any further regulations beyond these. Therefore, in all other respects licensing committees may regulate their own procedures and that of their sub-committees by following standard local authority committee procedures.

Lottery Funding

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much lottery funding was received from distributors for expenditure on *(a)* the arts, *(b)* National Heritage and *(c)* sport in each year from 1997 to 2004; and if she will make a statement. [207615]

Estelle Morris: The following amounts of lottery money were distributed by distributors within the Arts, Heritage and Sports good causes, by calendar year:

£ million

	Arts	*Heritage*	*Sport*
1997	359	474	176
1998	195	318	252
1999	241	212	303
2000	129	172	369
2001	199	239	449
2002	174	316	421
2003	196	333	162
2004[1]	86	169	30

[1] The figures for 2004 are not yet final due to lags in the reporting process.

This information is freely available from the Department's searchable lottery award database at www.lottery.culture.gsi.gov.uk, which uses information supplied by the lottery distributors.

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what steps the Department is taking to ensure that past lottery awards were legitimate. [205238]

Estelle Morris: Individual lottery awards are matters for decision by each distributing body acting independently of the Government. The Department would, however, expect distributors to make awards that are not only legitimate but which support good quality, value for money projects that further the purposes and objectives of the body distributing lottery funds.

Each lottery distributing body is required under its financial directions, or where appropriate under other financial control documents, to have controls in place to detect and deter fraud. Where actual cases of fraud are detected, distributing bodies are required to inform the Department, to investigate thoroughly and to take appropriate action to recover public funds. The Department would expect distributors to examine the lessons learned from any such cases and to make the improvements to controls and systems necessary to prevent a recurrence.

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on the alleged attempt to defraud the National Lottery. [205882]

Estelle Morris: I can confirm that we are being kept closely informed by the Big Lottery Fund about a fraud investigation, and that the police and National Audit Office were informed. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State will make a full statement as soon as it is appropriate to do so. In the meantime, I can assure the hon. Member that all necessary action is being taken to identify the scale and nature of the suspected fraud, and to identify any improvements to controls which may be necessary.

National Play Strategy

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what progress has been made in the adoption of a national play strategy; what resources have been allocated towards it; and if she will make a statement. [207243]

Estelle Morris: We will shortly be responding to the review of children's play carried out by the right hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson) last year, and over the course of the coming year we will build on this in developing Government play policy.

National Water Sports Centre

Mr. Rendel: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on the *(a)* purpose and *(b)* future of the National Water Sports Centre at Holme Pierrepoint. [206415]

Mr. Caborn: The National Water Sports Centre at Holme Pierrepont is primarily a facility for rowing and canoeing. It is a training camp for many of the country's leading watersportsmen and women and it is the main venue for national competitions.

Nottinghamshire county council and Sport England are discussing the future role and development of the site because many of the facilities and the current operating model date back to the 1970s. Discussions are at a very early stage and no timescales for development have yet been set.

In the event of a successful 2012 Olympic bid, the site could serve as a preparation base for visiting, or British teams, in the run-up to the Games; but this would be a matter for the teams in question to consider.

Mr. Rendel: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport who owns the National Water Sports Centre at Holme Pierrepoint. [206416]

Mr. Caborn: The National Watersports Centre site at Holme Pierrepont is owned by Nottinghamshire County Council.

In the early 1970s, the site was developed in partnership between the county council and the then Sports Council. The Sports Council Trust Company is the current leaseholder.

Office of Communications

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what salary is paid to the *(a)* chair, *(b)* chief executive and *(c)* board members of the Office of Communications; and how many days' work a week each is expected to undertake. [207023]

Estelle Morris: Details of the remuneration paid to Office of Communications board members are published in the Ofcom Annual Report 2003–04 (section E), a copy of which is in the Library and on the Ofcom website: www.ofcom.org.uk <http://www.ofcom.org.uk>. The time commitment of non-executive board members is a maximum of four days a week for the chair and two days a week for others. The Chief Executive and other Executive Members of Ofcom's Board are full-time employees of Ofcom.

Pay TV

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many pay television subscriptions the Department had in each year since 1997; and what the cost was in each year. [207655]

Mr. Caborn: Television subscription channels are available for each Minister, Private Office, the Press Office and the Information Centre. The total number is 12.

Costs are held for years 2002–03 (£27,100) and 2003–04 (£31,067). Costs are not held for the previous years.

Press Officers

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many press officers are employed in the Department. [206520]

Mr. Caborn: Seven press officers are employed in the Department at present.

Rowing

Mr. Rendel: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what measures she is taking to promote the sport of rowing. [206413]

Mr. Caborn: Sport England funds the Amateur Rowing Association (ARA) through both the Lottery and the Exchequer to support its development and world class plans. Since 1997, the ARA has received £15.5 million of funding. Amongst other programmes, this has allowed it to develop Project Oarsome and Go Row, both aimed at increasing junior participation. The ARA has also received an allocation of £1,216,500 from the Community Club Development Programme for distribution amongst rowing clubs. On top of this, since 1997 community rowing clubs have benefited from Sport England awards totalling £19.8 million.

In 2003 rowing was identified as one of the thirty sports to receive prioritised investment from Sport England's new national funding stream. The ARA has submitted a Whole Sport Plan for the sport to cover the period April 2005–09. This plan is currently under review by Sport England's national investment panel and a decision on future funding levels will be made shortly.

Mr. Rendel: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much funding her Department has provided to Project Oarsome since its inception; and if she will make a statement on the outcome. [206414]

Mr. Caborn: Sport England provided a Lottery grant of £1.6 million—out of total project funding of £2.5 million—to support the Amateur Rowing Association's Project Oarsome.

The project, which aims to attract, support and retain young people in rowing, has seen 110 schools linked with 51 rowing clubs, involving some 30,000 Year 7, 8 and 9 pupils. There are currently over 500 club coaches working in schools.

Over the course of the project there has been a 104 per cent. increase in junior club membership, a 35 per cent. increase in club membership overall and a 145 per cent.

increase in active qualified coaches. A survey of the project found that 94 per cent. of the children involved considered the scheme to be 'excellent or very good'.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport whether she has been informed of breaches of the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers in her Department since its implementation. [201292]

Mr. Caborn: Paragraph 22 of the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers states that any civil servant who believes that action of a special adviser goes beyond that adviser's authority or breeches the Civil Service Code should raise the matter immediately with the Secretary of the Cabinet or the First Civil Commissioner, directly or through a senior civil servant.

Information relating to complaints made by civil servants to the civil service commissioner is set out in the civil service commissioners' annual report.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport whether departmental special advisers have attended meetings with external *(a)* bodies and *(b)* individuals, in their official capacity and without Ministers, since May 1997. [203447]

Mr. Caborn: Special advisers attend meetings with a wide range of external representatives in their official capacity. All such meetings are conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport whether departmental special advisers have made speeches in their official capacity since May 1997. [203506]

Mr. Caborn: Any speeches made by special advisers in an official capacity are conducted in accordance with the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport whether departmental special advisers have been responsible for authorising instances of departmental spending since May 1997. [203916]

Mr. Caborn: The terms and conditions under which special advisers are appointed are set out in the Model Contract for Special Advisers and the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers. The special advisers who work at DCMS do not have executive powers allowing them to authorise departmental expenditure.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport whether departmental special advisers have given instructions to permanent civil servants without the explicit authorisation of Ministers since May 1997. [203973]

Mr. Caborn: The terms and conditions under which special advisers are appointed are set out in the Model Contract for Special Advisers and the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers. Neither of the DCMS special advisers has executive powers authorising them to give instructions to civil servants.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport whether departmental special advisers have written to external *(a)* bodies and *(b)* individuals in their official capacity since May 1997. [204285]

Mr. Caborn: The Department's special advisers contacts with external bodies and organisations are undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many special advisers there are in the Department, broken down by Civil Service pay-grade. [206514]

Mr. Caborn: Details on the names and number of special advisers by pay band by Department are published on annual basis. For information for the financial year 2003–04, I refer the hon. Member to the statement given by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister on 22 July 2004, *Official Report*, column 466W.

Information for 2004–05 will be published as soon as it is ready after the end of the current financial year.

Stolen Property

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will list the property belonging to her Department that has been *(a)* stolen and *(b)* reported lost in each year since 1997, broken down by type of article. [206374]

Mr. Caborn: All losses and thefts of property are reported annually to Her Majesty's Treasury and thefts are also recorded as security breaches. Records of thefts and losses prior to 1998 are no longer available.

	£
1998	[1]1,350
1999	0
2000	0
2001	[2]1,823
2002	[3]3,200
2003	0
2004	[4]0

[1] Lap top computer

[2] Personal computer, PC ancillaries

[3] Computer equipment

[4] To date

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many civil servants from her Department have *(a)* faced disciplinary proceedings as a result of allegations of theft, *(b)* been charged with theft and *(c)* been dismissed following theft allegations in each year since 1997. [206404]

Mr. Caborn: No civil servant in the Department for Culture, Media and Sport has faced disciplinary proceedings as a result of allegations of theft since 1997.

TV Licence

Mr. Todd: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport by what process she monitors the effectiveness of television licence compliance measures; and if she will make a statement. [206911]

Estelle Morris: Since 1991, the BBC has had responsibility for the administration and enforcement of the television licensing system. The Director General of the BBC is deemed to be the BBC's Accounting Officer for these purposes and as such is accountable to the National Audit Office (NAO) and the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) for the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of the collection and enforcement arrangements, which were reviewed by the NAO and PAC in 2002.

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport does not have formal procedures for monitoring the efficiency and effectiveness of the BBC's licence fee activities. However, the Department believes it is essential that the BBC funding arrangements represent value for money and we shall consider this subject in detail as part of BBC Charter Review.

Mr. Todd: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many complaints were received in *(a)* 2001–02, *(b)* 2002–03 and *(c)* 2003–04 relating to the pursuit of those who do not have a television but who receive letters or visits demanding that they pay for a licence. [206912]

Estelle Morris: The Department for Culture, Media and Sport receives a considerable volume of correspondence about the television licensing system, including complaints about various aspects of TV Licensing's administrative and enforcement activities. However, the Department's correspondence records are not held in such a way as to permit detailed tallies of specific types of complaint.

Video Violence

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (1) what the outcome was of the cross-departmental meeting held in the week beginning 6 December concerning violent video games; [206220]

(2) what initiatives the Government plan to take with regard to control of violent videos. [206221]

Estelle Morris: On 10 December, DCMS officials, along with those from DTI and the Home Office, met representatives of the computer games industry, the retail trade, the Video Standards Council, the mobile phone industry, the Local Government Association, the Trading Standards Institute and the British Board of Film Classification, to discuss ways in which the selling of violent computer games could be better regulated.

The meeting explored possible improvements to the labelling and packaging of such games and the training of retail staff selling games. Further discussions are being held with interested parties on those and a range of other issues, including strengthening the enforcement regime of illegal sales.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the results have been of research undertaken by the Government concerning media classification and violent video games. [206222]

Estelle Morris: DCMS is commissioning a review of extant research to determine whether there is a link between playing violent video games and real-world behaviour. The last such Government study was carried out by the Home Office in 2001, the results of which were inconclusive.

Working Time Regulations

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many officials working in ministerial private offices in the Department have worked more than a 48 hour week at any time in the last 12 months for which figures are available; how many of those had signed a waiver under working time regulations; and what percentage these figures represented of the total in each case. [204147]

Mr. Caborn: The Working Time Regulations provide workers with the protection of a limit of an average of 48 hours a week working time. This is not an absolute cap of 48 hours in any one week. This average is normally calculated over a 17-week reference period, although this can be longer in certain situations (26 weeks) and can be extended by agreement (up to 52 weeks). Workers may choose to work more than 48 hours per week over this reference period by signing an opt-out agreement, but employers cannot force a worker to sign an opt-out, and workers cannot be subjected to detriment for refusing to sign an opt-out. 11 staff in the Department's ministerial private offices have signed an opt-out agreement.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Bangladesh

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development when Maxwell Stamp plc are due to report to him on progress in delivering the Chars Livelihood Programme: concept and management in Bangladesh; and if he will place a copy of the report in the Library. [206161]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: Maxwell Stamp plc started the Chars Livelihoods Programme (CLP) in July 2004 following approval by the Government of Bangladesh. A substantive report on progress, including its management, is expected a year later by August 2005. Maxwell Stamp plc is now preparing an action plan to adapt the CLP, which was prepared two years ago in 2002, to the current situation in the Chars. The action plan will take account of recent developments in the Chars and ensure that the programme meets current needs.

DFID will conduct an independent annual review of the programme by the end of November 2005 and a copy of the report will be available on request.

Central Africa

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much *(a)* monetary aid and *(b)* food aid was provided to each country in Central Africa by (i) EU member states, (ii) the EU, (iii) the US and (iv) the UK, with the aim of relieving the humanitarian and social burden of refugee populations from the host nation in each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [206325]

Hilary Benn: Current available data do not allow a complete answer to this question. Many donors, including DFID, provide a significant part of their support to humanitarian agencies either as unearmarked contributions, or on an Africa-wide basis, which does not lend itself to being broken down by specific Central African countries. Additionally, agencies often target refugees as well as other vulnerable groups within one single operation, making it difficult to isolate the support to refugees.

DFID channels the majority of its monetary support to refugee operations through the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Globally, (including Central Africa), from 1997 until 2004, DFID contributions to the UNHCR have totalled £145 million. For the same period, US contributions have totalled £1.2 billion, EC contributions have totalled £350 million, and EU member state contributions combined (not including UK contributions) have amounted to £1 billion. Of the £26 million provided to the UNHCR in 2003, £15 million (57 per cent.) was unearmarked but certainly contributed to the Central African operations, a further £1 million (4 per cent.) was earmarked for general Africa operations, and an additional £1.5 million (6 per cent.) was specifically earmarked for operations in Chad and the DRC.

From 1997 until 2003, DFID also channelled a further £11 million of support to non-UN agencies operating in support of refugee programmes across the Central and Great Lakes Regions of Africa.

For food assistance to refugees, DFID channels the majority of its funding through the World Food Programme (WFP). Again, it is not possible to disaggregate this support accurately by specific countries. However, from 1998 until 2004, DFID support to the WFP globally has totalled £300 million, and DFID is currently the WFP's fourth largest donor. For the same period, US support to the WFP has totalled £3.8 billion, EC support has totalled £650 million, and combined EU member-state contributions (not including the UK) have amounted to £920 million. As a Central African example, 2004 contributions to the WFP's feeding programme for Sudanese refugees in Chad have seen the UK commit £2.2 million compared to the US contribution of £16 million, the EC contribution of £1.4 million, and the non-UK EU member state contributions totalling £4.3 million.

Meeting the food and non-food requirements of refugee populations in Central Africa remains a humanitarian priority for DFID. In addition, DFID actively promotes local acceptance of refugees by channelling parallel support to host populations and refugee-affected areas. And ultimately, DFID supports the search for durable solutions for refugee populations, promoting and facilitating voluntary repatriation when conditions in the country-of-origin permit. At the same time, DFID also prioritises similar standards of assistance to Internally Displaced Persons.

Additional information on other donor contributions to refugee operations in Africa can be found on the websites of the UNHCR (www.unhcr.ch), the WFP (www.wfp.org), Reliefweb (www.reliefweb.int), the US Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (www.state.gov/g/prm/), and the European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO) (http://europa.eu.int/comm/echo/index_en.htm).

Christmas Cards

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what percentage of official departmental Christmas cards included a contribution to charity in their cost; and which charities benefited from such a contribution. [205102]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID produced its own card this year. There was no contribution to charity included in the production costs.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the cost was of purchasing official departmental Christmas cards in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004. [205104]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: In 2003, DFID paid £4,597.78p for 6,000 cards. In 2004 DFID paid £2,211.36p for 7,000 cards. Both these costs include envelopes and delivery charges.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) how many official Christmas cards were sent out by his Department in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004; [205105]

(2) what the cost of postage was for official departmental Christmas cards in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004. [205103]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: In 2003, DFID produced 6,000 cards. In 2004 DFID produced 7,000 cards. Quantities of cards are sent to DFID teams on request. This covers staff based in UK HQs and offices overseas. As individual teams have been responsible for sending out cards to stakeholders and contacts the cost of obtaining the information required by this question would be disproportionate to the end result.

Correspondence

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what his target time is in 2004–05 *(a)* to reply to letters from hon. Members and *(b)* for the officials in his office to reply to letters received directly from members of the public. [200866]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: The target time for reply to all correspondence received by DFID from Members of Parliament and the public is 15 working days; in line with the target time prescribed by Cabinet Office. Information on the departmental handling of correspondence from Members of Parliament/Peers is published annually by the Cabinet Office. The 2003 annual report is available in the Library of the House.

Departmental Credit Cards

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many credit cards for official expenditure are held by his Department. [206442]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID holds 27 official credit cards in the UK. These are mainly used for the purchase of low value items under the Government Procurement Card arrangements.

Documents

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what his Department's policy is in relation to the storage of documents and the use of shredders; and whether this policy has been reviewed in the past 12 months. [206741]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: The Department for International Development (DFID) continues to implement well-established policies and procedures for the review and disposal of files in accordance with its administrative needs and the Public Records Acts.

Paper files for which there is no longer a business need, and which are not of historical interest, are destroyed in accordance with disposal schedules agreed between DFID and the National Archives. Material which is protectively marked is shredded, in line with the policy outlined in DFID's Security Manual, which is itself derived from Her Majesty's Government's Manual of Protective Security. This policy has not changed in the past 12 months.

HIV/AIDS

Ms Keeble: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much financial assistance will be allocated for his Department's strategy for meeting the needs of HIV/AIDS orphans and vulnerable children; and how much of this will be allocated to *(a)* civil society organisations in developing countries, *(b)* international relief organisations and *(c)* budget support for developing country governments. [204816]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: In the UK's AIDS Strategy "Taking Action", published in July 2004, DFID stated that we will commit £150 million to meet the needs of orphans and other children, particularly those in Africa, made vulnerable by HIV and AIDS.

On 16 December, I detailed how the £150 million would be spent at the Global Partners Forum on Orphans and Vulnerable Children in Washington. A copy of the speech is available in the Library of the House. The following table shows how the £150 million will be allocated.

	£ million
Through UNICEF	44
Through DFID African country programmes	85
Through DFID Asian country programmes	4
Scientific research	2
To be programmed	15
Total	150

Of the £44 million of support to be delivered through UNICEF, £38 million will support activities in Africa, £5 million will support UNICEF's global-level work, and £1 million for work in Asia. The remaining £15 million will be programmed as needs emerge.

Part of the money that goes through DFID country programmes may take the form of budget support to governments to advance their national OVC plans through health and education sectors, social protection programmes and working with civil society.

Iraq

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development pursuant to his answer of 13 December 2004 to the hon. Member for Tooting (Tom Cox), *Official Report*, columns 819–20, on Iraq, what the source was of his information that water was supplied to remaining civilians in Fallujah by Iraqi and multinational forces; and how his Department's advisers made their estimate that only about 1,500 civilians remain in Fallujah. [206313]

Hilary Benn: UK officials in Iraq maintain close contact with the Iraqi interim Government (IIG), and with representatives of the Multi-National Force-Iraq (MNF-I), who reported that forces had supplied water to the civilians remaining in Fallujah. In addition, the Iraqi Ministry of Health and the US Marines report that they had stockpiled supplies of water and other essential items, prior to military action. There is also an MNF-I Civil Military Operations Centre in Fallujah, which is helping to co-ordinate provision of essential supplies to civilians. Visits by DFID advisers confirm that water tankers have been operating in Fallujah, supplying the needs of the residents who remain.

DFID advisers are working closely with the Iraqi Interim Government Fallujah Core Group, which is responsible for co-ordinating humanitarian work in and around Fallujah. The estimate that 1,500 civilians remain in Fallujah was reached after visits to the city by DFID advisers, members of the Iraqi Ministry of Health, and British military officials. The IIG Fallujah Core Group and a UN Emergency Working Group are also monitoring the location and condition of Fallujah's displaced citizens. They have been able to estimate numbers both outside and inside Fallujah through assessment visits to the surrounding area.

Seychelles

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what role was played by CDC in the Seychelles gas turbine project; and whether his Department has conducted investigations into it. [206292]

Hilary Benn: In 1993, the CDC provided a £1.8 million loan facility to the Seychelles Public Utilities Corporation (PUC) in connection with the upgrading of the Victoria A Power Station on the island of Mahe. The facility was used to purchase a gas-turbine electrical generator. CDC's role was solely that of financier.

DFID has not conducted any investigation into this matter.

Stolen Property

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many civil servants from his Department have *(a)* faced disciplinary proceedings as a result of allegations of theft, *(b)* been charged with theft and *(c)* been dismissed following theft allegations in each year since 1997. [206392]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: The Department for International Development (DFID) considers theft to be gross misconduct as set out in its Discipline

Procedures, the maximum penalty for which, if the case is proven following a duly instigated investigation and disciplinary meeting, is dismissal and the possibility of criminal proceedings. Details of this procedure are contained in DFID's Staff Handbook, available to all staff. The following table sets out all disciplinary cases in DFID relating to theft since 1998 as provided to HM Treasury.

	(a) Disciplinary proceedings	*(b) Charged with theft*	*(c) Dismissed*
1998–99	3	3	2
1999–2000	2	2	2
2000–01	1	1	0
2001–02	8	8	5
2002–03	5	5	4
2003–04	5	5	5

Note:

DFID employs both civil servants and staff appointed in country in its overseas offices. Figures include staff from both categories.

Sudan

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assistance the Government is providing to *(a)* the government of Sudan and *(b)* non-governmental organisations operating in Sudan, broken down by (i) the amount and (ii) the use to which funds are being put; and if he will make a statement. [206075]

Hilary Benn: DFID currently provides no support directly to the Government of Sudan.

The table sets out our allocations for this financial year 2004–2005 to non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) working in Sudan.

Agency	*Description*	*Total Cost (£ million)*
Sudan (non-Darfur) Allocations		
MSF	Provision of healthcare	2,646,833
HNI	Healthcare	13,500
Merlin	Provision of healthcare	500,000
Oxfam	Food security	1,088,368
Okenden	HIV/AIDS	296,666
CARE	Peace building	958,794
Tearfund	Health	708,500
Worldvision	Nutrition	316,078
ACF	Nutrition	299,895
GOAL	Nutrition and Education	1,447,349
Conern	Nutrition	300,000
Christian Aid	Nutrition	499,790
Rift Valley Institute	Research and Training	83,503
Save the Children	Support to abducted women and children	375,000
Others small NGO contributions	Education and Health	376,241
Sub—total		9,910,517
Darfur Allocations		
SC-UK	Emergency Response to Conflict Related Internal Displacement in North Darfur	500,000
MSF-F	Emergency Assistance to IDPs in Darfur—through increasing access to health care in conflict areas, disease prevention, halting nutritional deterioration and treating malnourished children	491,369
MSF-F	Emergency Assistance to IDPs in Darfur—through increasing access to health care in conflict areas, disease prevention, halting nutritional deterioration and treating malnourished children	1,006,860
MSF-H	Darfur Components of Emergency Health Interventions in Northern Sudan Project	1,301,822
GOAL	Emergency Assistance to Population in Kutum Province, North Darfur—through a combined Health, Nutrition and Shelter Intervention	575,963
ACF	Emergency Nutrition Programme in North Darfur	250,000
ACF	Emergency Nutrition Programme in North Darfur	623,326
Oxfam	Public Health Humanitarian Response Darfur (Water/Sanitation programme)	2,193,161
MSF- Belgium	Emergency Health Care for IDPs in North Darfur	1,338,600
CARE	Logistics operation to improve access to shelter and non-food items for IDPs in Greater Darfur	603,195
International Rescue Committee	Provision of Environmental Health, Primary Health and Child Protection Services for War Affected Communities in North Darfur	728,849
SC-US	Emergency Water and Sanitation Intervention in West Darfur	676,206
SC-UK	Emergency Response to Conflict Affected Population in South Darfur	1,068,777
Medair	Emergency Assistance to IDPs through the provision of Primary Healthcare, Improved Access to Clean Water and Improved Sanitation in West Darfur	1,032,500
CAFOD	Emergency response programme in South and West Darfur	400,000
Medecins du Monde	Emergency medical aid for displaced populations in Kalma camp, South Darfur	456,151
Tearfund	Emergency Nutrition and Sanitation	447,692
World Vision	Emergency Sanitation for internally displaced persons and war-affected communities in Darfur	495,835
Valid International	Raising standards amongst agencies implementing community-based therapeutic care in Darfur, Sudan	98,595
International Rescue Committee	Health care for refugees and local populations in Eastern Chad	515,535

Agency	Description	Total Cost (£ million)
MSF—Belgium	Health care and nutrition for refugees and local populations in Eastern Chad	350,000
International Medical Corps	Health care and nutrition for refugees and local populations in Eastern Chad	469,090
Oxfam	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in Eastern Chad	1,232,239
Sub-total		16,855,765
Grand Total		26,766,282

The UN has recently launched its Workplan for 2005 for Sudan, totalling $1.48 billion.

The UK has committed 100 million for Sudan for 2005, provisional upon signature of a Comprehensive Peace Agreement. DFID will continue to work through NGOs, as well as other partners to meet the enormous needs.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what support he is giving to the provision of donkeys to internally displaced people in Darfur. [205625]

Hilary Benn: The UK is a leading donor of humanitarian assistance for internally displaced people (IDP) in Darfur. DFiD's priority is to support the UN and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to meet the emergency needs of the displaced people through the most appropriate help.

Donkeys are an important asset, as part of people's livelihoods. One part of our support to the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) deals with feed and health care to donkeys both in camps and outside. DFID support includes £1 million to the FAO, whose priority is to provide veterinarian support for donkeys and livestock.

We are now thinking about how we can support livelihoods in the medium and long-term if and when conditions improve. It is important that UN agencies receive up front funding so they can plan ahead. Part of this support will go to the FAO, who will be the lead agency in terms of rehabilitation of livelihoods, including help with livestock and animal health.

Taskforces

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much was spent by his Department in each year since 1997 on taskforces and similar bodies. [204883]

Hilary Benn *[holding answer 16 December 2004]:* Since 1997, the Department for International Development (DFID) has been responsible for 11 non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs), task forces and advisory bodies. Expenditure for each is as follows:

£ million

	1997	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
Executive NDPBs							
Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the United Kingdom	20	19	18	19	19	18	21
Commission costs including honoraria, welcome programme etc	0.055	0.063	0.084	0.096	0.107	0.116	0.140
Crown Agents Holding and Realisation Board	0.053	0	0	0	0	0	0
Advisory NDPBs							
Advisory Committee on Overseas Economic & Social Research	0.001	0.001	0	0.001	0.001	—	—
Development Awareness Working Group	—	0.002	0	0.007	0.007	—	—
Indian family Pensions Funds Body of Commissioners	0.001	0.001	0	0.001	0.001	—	—
Know How Fund Advisory Board	0.001	0.001	0	—	—	—	—
Overseas Service Pensions Scheme Advisory Board	0.001	0.001	0	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001
Task Force							
Commission on Intellectual Property Rights	—	—	—	—	—	0	—
Ad-hoc Advisory Groups							
Renewable Natural Resources Research Strategy	—	—	—	—	—	0	—
Rural Enterprise Technology Facility (RETF) Working Group	—	—	—	—	—	0	—
Public Corporations							
Commonwealth Development Corporation	0	0	0	0	—	—	—

Note:

The majority of costs listed relate to administrative charges and the reimbursement of travelling expenses. Where '0' is shown, this signifies costs of less than £1,000.

DFID provides funding to support the Commonwealth Scholarships and Fellowships Plan which is administered by the Commonwealth Scholarships Commission in the UK, an NDPB. The Plan provides scholarships and fellowships for students from Commonwealth countries to study either in the UK or, increasingly, through distance learning in country. Since 1997, DFID has provided a total of £62.5 million to the overall costs of the plan; of this £747,545 was the total cost for the operation of the Commission.

Uzbekistan

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what representations he has made to the Government of Uzbekistan about the restrictions placed on non-governmental organisations operating in the country. [205275]

Mr. Rammell: I have been asked to reply.

We continue to be concerned by the restrictions imposed upon and the harassment suffered by the NGO community in Uzbekistan.

In February 2004 the EU wrote to the Minister of Justice stressing the importance of the contribution made to society by NGOs and raised the issue again with the Deputy Minister of Justice in March.

We were very concerned to learn of the refusal of the Ministry of Justice to re-register the Open Society Institute in April. The EU raised this with the Uzbek Government at senior ministerial level in a demarche, which was delivered by the UK as acting Presidency in Tashkent. We are still pressing for an official response..

In November we received reports that the Uzbek authorities might not renew the visa of the Director of Human Rights Watch in Uzbekistan, Allison Gill. We joined EU partners in bringing the issue to the attention of Foreign Minister Safayev in a meeting on 11 November. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary followed this with a letter to Mr. Safayev pressing for the renewal of Ms Gill's visa, in which he said that:

> "the activities of civil society groups such as Human Rights Watch are an essential part of a healthy democracy."

An extension has been granted until 31 December, We will continue to press for a full renewal.

Veterinary Support

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what recent support his Department has given to charities which provide veterinary support to working animals in *(a)* Darfur and *(b)* other areas. [206214]

Hilary Benn: DFID recognises the important role of livestock as a key livelihood asset. Preventing ill health and the death of working animals is as critical as provision of new ones.

In Darfur, DFID support includes £1 million to the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), whose priority is to provide veterinarian support for donkeys and livestock. This includes the provision of feed and health care to 14,000 donkeys, 90,000 small ruminants, and 180,000 chickens both in camps and outside. In addition the programme includes provision for the training of community animal health monitors.

Working Time Regulations

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many officials working in ministerial private offices in the Department have worked more than a 48 hour week at any time in the last 12 months for which figures are available; how many of those had signed a waiver under working time regulations; and what percentage these figures represented of the total in each case. [204141]

Hilary Benn: The Working Time Regulations provide workers with the protection of a limit of an average of 48 hours a week working time. This is not an absolute cap of 48 hours in any one week. This average is normally calculated over a 17-week reference period, although this can be longer in certain situations (26 weeks) and can be extended by agreement (up to 52 weeks). Workers may choose to work more than 48 hours per week over this reference period by signing an opt-out agreement, but employers cannot force a worker to sign an opt-out, and workers cannot be subjected to detriment for refusing to sign an opt-out.

No DFID Ministerial Private Office staff have signed an opt-out agreement. DFID is committed to maintaining and improving the work-life balance of all its staff, including those in Ministerial offices.

Seven staff in DFID Ministerial Private Offices have worked more than a 48 hour week on at least one occasion in the last twelve months for which figures are available. This represents approximately 40 per cent. of the total staff in DFID Ministerial offices.

DEFENCE

Ex-service Personnel (Homelessness)

14. **Mr. Borrow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what steps the Department is taking to tackle homelessness among ex-service personnel. [207389]

Mr. Caplin: The Ministry of Defence has been working closely with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, other Government Departments, veterans' organisations and other service providers to put in place a coordinated and structured approach to tackle homelessness among a small minority of ex-Service personnel. Our aim is both to prevent new Service leavers becoming homeless as well as to provide an effective safety net for existing vulnerable and homeless ex-Service personnel.

Yorkshire Regiment

15. **Mr. Greenway:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the future deployment of the proposed Yorkshire Regiment. [207390]

Mr. Hoon: The three battalions that will form the Yorkshire Regiment by 2008 are 1 Green Howards, 1 Prince of Wales's Own Regiment of Yorkshire, and 1 Duke of Wellington's Regiment. The Duke of Wellington's Regiment is currently serving in Iraq, a deployment that is expected to last until May 2005. The Green Howards are planned to deploy to Bosnia in 2006. The Prince of Wales's Own Regiment is currently training in Catterick with 19 Brigade, and in 2006 it will be allocated on standby to the NATO Reaction Force.

Scottish Regiments

16. **John Barrett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on recent progress in taking forward his plans for the Scottish regiments. [207391]

Mr. Hoon: As I announced to the House on 16 December, we plan to reduce by one the number of battalions in the Scottish Division. This will be achieved by merging the First Battalions of the Royal Scots and the King's Own Scottish Borderers. This new battalion, together with the other four regular battalions, will form a new large regiment, known as the Royal Regiment of Scotland.

Royal Welch Fusiliers

17. **Mr. Llwyd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what recent discussions he has had with senior officers of the Royal Welch Fusiliers on the future of the regiment; and if he will make a statement. [207392]

Mr. Hoon: The process of re-structuring the infantry has been worked through by the Army, consulting with the divisions and regiments concerned.

The outcome of the Army's deliberations which I announced on 16 December, is that a new large infantry regiment will be formed to be known as The Royal Welsh. It will consist of 1st Battalion The Royal Welsh (The Royal Welch Fusiliers) and 2nd Battalion The Royal Welsh (The Royal Regiment of Wales).

Far East (Internees)

18. **Mr. Ben Chapman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on compensation for those interned in the Far East. [207393]

Mr. Caplin: In November 2000, the Government instituted the scheme to make ex-gratia payments of £10,000 each to members of certain groups held captive by the Japanese during the second world war. Among those covered by the scheme are civilian internees who were British subjects and had a close connection with the United Kingdom at the time of their captivity. By 5 January this year 23,949 payments had been made to those held captive or their surviving spouses. These include 2,325 payments to former civilian internees themselves.

Defence Industrial Policy

19. **Mr. Hendrick:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what steps the Department has taken to implement the Defence Industrial Policy. [207394]

Mr. Ingram: The principles set out in the Government's Defence Industrial Policy apply to all acquisition decisions and we continue to work closely with industry to deliver the maximum benefits from its implementation. In particular we have made progress in areas such as market access, cooperation with our allies, maximising the benefits from our investment in research and technology and making improvements to our acquisition and capability management processes. In developing the Defence Industrial Strategy we are undertaking work to identify in more detail the technical capabilities that are likely to be needed to meet defence needs in the future and to assess the importance of sustaining them in the UK for national security, technology or wider economic reasons. We will publish a review shortly of the implementation of our Policy which will set this out in more detail.

King's Lancashire and Border Regiment

22. **Mr. Gordon Prentice:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will rename the King's, Lancashire and Border Regiment the Royal Lancashire Regiment. [207397]

Mr. Hoon: The process of restructuring the infantry has been worked through by the Army consulting with the divisions and regiments concerned. As part of this process those infantry divisions affected by the changes were asked to suggest options for new regimental titles. Of the options put forward by the King's Division, the proposed title of the 'King's, Lancashire and Border Regiment', was felt by the Army Board to best reflect all the antecedent regiments from which it will be drawn.

Iraq

23 **Ross Cranston:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what role the armed forces have played in the reconstruction of Iraq. [207398]

Mr. Hoon: I refer my hon. and learned Friend to the answer I gave earlier today to my hon Friend, the Member for the City of York (Hugh Bayley).

Chris Bryant: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the military situation in Iraq. [207395]

Mr. Hoon: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave today to the right hon. Member for Bracknell (Mr. Mackay).

Electoral Registration (Service Personnel)

Mr. Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what steps he will take to encourage electoral registration by service voters. [207396]

Mr. Caplin: An internal information campaign will begin at the end of this month. This will be linked with the publication of a revised Defence Council Instruction providing full information and practical help on how to register, and explaining the various voting options available for the service community.

Administrative Discharges

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many administrative discharges have taken place under Queen's Regulation paragraph *(a)* 9.398, *(b)* 9.403, *(c)* 9.404, *(d)* 9.405, *(e)* 9.411, *(f)* 9.412, *(g)* 9.413 and *(h)* 9.414 since 1997. [201490]

Mr. Caplin: The number of discharges that have taken place under the requested Queen's Regulation paragraphs are:

Soldiers

Date of flow/outflow code Queen's Regs.	*Grand total*
1998	
(a) 9.398	—
(b) 9.403	0
(c) 9.404	120
(d) 9.405	160
(e) 9.411	15
(f) 9.412	0
(g) 9.413	[1]190
(h) 9.414	1,100
1999	
(a) 9.398	0
(b) 9.403	5
(c) 9.404	110
(d) 9.405	180
(e) 9.411	15

Soldiers

Date of flow/outflow code Queen's Regs.	*Grand total*
(f) 9.412	—
(g) 9.413	95
(h) 9.414	925
2000	
(a) 9.398	10
(b) 9.403	—
(c) 9.404	90
(d) 9.405	170
(e) 9.411	20
(f) 9.412	—
(g) 9.413	65
(h) 9.414	1,165
2001	
(a) 9.398	0
(b) 9.403	—
(c) 9.404	115
(d) 9.405	150
(e) 9.411	20
(f) 9.412	0
(g) 9.413	45
(h) 9.414	1,315
2002	
(a) 9.398	10
(b) 9.403	0
(c) 9.404	120
(d) 9.405	160
(e) 9.411	20
(f) 9.412	0
(g) 9.413	5
(h) 9.414	1,125
2003	
(a) 9.398	—
(b) 9.403	—
(c) 9.404	135
(d) 9.405	170
(e) 9.411	20
(f) 9.412	0
(g) 9.413	0
(h) 9.414	1,375
Grand total	9,220

[1] Figures for *(g)* 9.413 in 1998 have been revised due to later information.

Notes:

1. The data have been rounded to the nearest 5.
2. Totals and sub-totals have been rounded separately and so may not appear as the sum of their parts.
3. Data less than 5 are suppressed and replaced by '—'.

Afghanistan

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what role British forces are undertaking in Afghanistan. [205911]

Mr. Ingram: The bulk of the United Kingdom's military forces in Afghanistan serve with the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). They help to maintain security in Kabul, and, through our Provincial Reconstruction Teams, aid the expansion of the Afghan Government's authority across the north-west of the country and facilitate Security Sector Reform and reconstruction. Separately, we have deployed a detachment of six Harrier GR7 aircraft to Kandahar to provide Close Air Support and aerial reconnaissance to both coalition and ISAF forces. Finally, we provide staff officers to support the coalition headquarters in Kabul.

Armed Forces (Ethnic Minorities)

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many *(a)* male and *(b)* female soldiers from ethnic minorities are serving in each of the armed services. [205921]

Mr. Caplin: As at 1 October 2004 the estimated[1] number of armed forces personnel[2] from ethnic minority backgrounds was as follows:

Service	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*
Naval Service	870	120	990
Army	7,280	770	8,060
Royal Air Force	1,150	170	1,310
All services	9,300	1,060	10,360

[1] Figures provided are full coverage estimates which show the number of ethnic minorities that would be expected if ethnicity were known for all personnel.

[2] Figures are for UK regular forces (including both trained and untrained personnel), and therefore excludes Gurkhas, full time reserve service personnel, the home service battalions of the Royal Irish Regiment, mobilised reservists and naval activated reservists.

All figures include both officers and other ranks and are rounded to the nearest 10. Due to the rounding methods used totals may not equal the sum of the parts.

Christmas Deployment

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many members of the three services he expects to be *(a)* serving abroad and *(b)* deployed on front-line duties between 24 December and 2 January 2005; what percentage of the trained strength of each force this represents; and if he will make a statement. [201879]

Mr. Caplin *[holding answer 9 December 2004]:* The following table gives the numbers of personnel on Operations as at 20 December 2004, and the numbers serving overseas, but not on operations as at 1 December 2004. It is not anticipated that the figure for personnel deployed on operations will change significantly over the Christmas period. The numbers of personnel serving overseas, but not on operations, is likely to be significantly smaller over the Christmas period, as personnel in Germany and Cyprus, for example, may chose to take their leave back in the UK.

Service	*Number deployed on Operations*	*Number serving overseas not on operations*	*Percentage of trained strength*
Naval Service	1,200	450	4.5
Army	7,850	19,200	26
Royal Air Force	1,750	3,200	10e

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what provision he has made to ensure that those members of the armed forces serving abroad and deployed on front-line duties between 24 December and 2 January 2005 are able to maintain family contact over that period; and if he will make statement. [201880]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 9 December 2004]:* Personnel deployed on operations are supported by either the Operational Welfare Package (OWP) or by

Local Overseas Allowance (LOA). The vast majority of personnel serving overseas, receive the OWP. The OWP provides 20 minutes of publicly funded telephone calls per week. This amount will be supplemented by a further 20 minutes for the Christmas week. In addition, personnel may purchase unlimited additional time through a standing arrangement with the service provider. Furthermore, under the OWP personnel are entitled to free internet access, which includes the ability to send and receive e-mails. Personnel serving in locations where the OWP has been granted receive free aerogrammes ('blueys') delivered by the British Forces Post Office (BFPO). A concessionary rate postal service also exists for letters and packets weighing up to 2kg sent from the UK mainland or BFPO addresses. Lastly, between 17 November and 15 December 2004, family members were entitled to send, free of charge, an unlimited number of packets weighing up to 2kg to Service personnel serving in overseas operational theatres.

LOA is a non-taxable allowance designed to meet the additional costs associated with communication (both verbal and written) from distant or remote locations not covered by OWP arrangements. The LOA reflects the actual costs of such communications from the location concerned.

Credit Cards

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many credit cards for official expenditure are held by his Department. [206439]

Mr. Caplin: As at 1 December 2004, the Ministry of Defence held 14,174 Government Procurement Cards, 2,026 Corporate Barclaycards and 3,630 American Express Corporate Cards.

Death in Service

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what *(a)* regulations and *(b)* procedures are applicable in the (i) Army, (ii) Royal Navy and (iii) Royal Air Force, following the death in service of individual personnel aged under 18 years of age, governing contacting (A) next of kin and (B) parents. [203103]

Mr. Ingram: The three Services have similar casualty notification regulations and procedures. All Service personnel complete an Emergency Contact form in which they nominate the person or persons to be contacted initially in the event of death or serious injury. In the case of under-18s this would usually be the parents although the choice rests with the individual. In the event of death of an under-18, should the individual have nominated an Emergency Contact who is not the next of kin, the Services would always ensure additionally that the next of kin is informed. The Services aim to inform next of kin and nominated contacts as swiftly and as sensitively as possible.

Defence Aviation Repair Agency

Mr. Keith Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much of the Defence Aviation Repair Agency's (DARA) turnover in 2003–04 came from *(a)* his Department and *(b)* the private sector; and for what reasons this information was not included in DARA's 2003–04 Annual Report and Accounts (HC 699, 2003–04). [206699]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 21 December 2004]:* DARA's turnover for 2003–04 can be analysed by customer as follows:

	£000
Contracts directly with the MOD	160,188
Contracts with the Private Sector where the ultimate customer is the MOD	28,677
Contracts with the Private Sector where the ultimate customer is a third party	673
Total turnover	189,538

The only analyses of turnover that are required to be shown in the Accounts are to give a breakdown by business and geographical segment where appropriate. Note 2 to the Accounts explained that 'substantially all of the turnover relates to the same class of business' and therefore no further breakdowns were required.

Dentistry

Mr. Keith Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the average cost of dental provision for a serviceman in *(a)* the UK, *(b)* Germany and *(c)* Cyprus was in the last period for which figures are available. [206602]

Mr. Caplin: The average cost of dental provision for a serviceman in the UK is £215.69 per person based on the current patient at risk (PAR) population. The Defence Dental Agency provides dental care to a mixture of personnel in Germany and Cyprus, which includes dependents and entitled civilians, as well as service personnel. It is not possible to separately identify the discreet costs of treating service personnel alone in those countries, except at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Costs

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on energy costs incurred by his Department in each of the last two years. [200799]

Mr. Caplin: Since 2000–01 the Ministry of Defence has reported aggregated utilities (gas, electricity and water supply) expenditure in the departmental resources and accounts. Separate energy costs are not collated. Expenditure on utilities is published in the National Statistics Publication: UK Defence Statistics 2004: Table 1.8a Defence Expenditure Outturn in the UK by Industry Group. A copy is available in the Library of the House.

Departmental Equipment

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the total cost was to his Department of equipment purchased from other members of the European Union in each of the last five years. [205916]

Mr. Ingram: Identifying work on equipment (including development and manufacture) which is purchased from other members of the European Union is complicated by internationally collaborative tasks (e.g. Typhoon), joint venture companies and international companies.

Estimates of expenditure paid by the Department (excluding its Trading Fund Agencies) for the last five years are provided in the following table. These estimates are compiled from location of work information associated with individual contractual payment data made by the Defence Bills Agency and EU partner work shares on international collaborative projects.

£ million (in current prices)

	Amount
1999–2000	670
2000–01	860
2001–02	830
2002–03	1,020
2003–04	1,000

The numbers have been rounded to the nearest £10 million and are inclusive of non-recoverable VAT.

In 2001–02 the Department introduced Resource Accounting and Budgeting (RAB) moving from the cash system that employed "Internal Account Codes" (IACs). Systems were still in transition in 2002–03. In 2003–04 Resource Accounting Codes (RACs) were fully implemented throughout the MOD systems. The move from IACs to RACs changes the method for identifying equipment spends and causes a break in the time series.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much has been spent by his Department on *(a)* indoor bought plants, *(b)* indoor hired plants, *(c)* outdoor bought plants and *(d)* outdoor hired plants in each year since 1997. [205596]

Mr. Caplin: This information is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much has been spent by his Department on *(a)* new furniture and *(b)* hired furniture in each year since 1997. [205610]

Mr. Caplin: The information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the cost of refurbishments in his Department was in each year since 1997; and what the planned expenditure is for 2005–06. [205672]

Mr. Caplin: "Refurbishment" is not a term which the Ministry of Defence uses in gathering or recording financial information about the estate, as it can be regarded as capital or maintenance expenditure depending on the circumstances. Work on buildings which might be categorised as "refurbishment" can range from minor modifications and maintenance, to the complete restoration of buildings, and the replacement of machinery such as lifts. Historic information is not held centrally or on a consistent basis and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Properties

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many properties are held by the Department; what total floor space these properties provide; how many properties are vacant; and how much floor space vacant properties comprise. [206490]

Mr. Caplin: The Department's building assets are listed at Chapter 7 of the 2001 National Asset Register which is maintained by HM Treasury and which is freely available on their website:

www.hm-treasury.gov.uk./media/135/OB/217.pdf.

Since 2001 there have been some 80 major disposals which are set out in the table below. In addition to freehold buildings, the Ministry of Defence also has in the order of 220 agreements to occupy buildings and parts of buildings. The above excludes housing.

The floor area of the Department's buildings was last calculated for the year 2002 and is now estimated to be in the order of 26 million/m^2.

Major disposals 2001–02 to date

Burscough depot	2001–02
Stirling Lines, Hereford	2001–02
RAF Burtonwood (phases)	2001–02
Rogers House pay office, Ashton under Lyne	2001–02
76 Newton Street Manchester	2001–02
TA centre Knightsbridge Newcastle (phases)	2001–02
Ypres Barracks Macclesfield	2001–02
TA centre Lumley Barracks York	2001–02
Borehamwood, Elstree Factory	2001–02
Cardington	2001–02
Chilwell, pt Chetwynd Bks	2001–02
Hilton Joint Venture	2001–02
Rosyth, Torridon Lane, Dr., Pl, Grampian Pl, Ct. Road	2001–02
Dunalister House/Laverockdale cottage/polo fields	2001–02
Arbroath, 2 to 20 (even) Hunter Road, 2 to 12 (even) Leach CL & Southern CL	2001–02
Edinburgh—Polton Estate	2001–02
Steeple Barracks, Antrim	2001–02
RAF Mansion	2001–02
RD Thatcham	2001–02
St. George's Court	2001–02
TACBrighton	2001–02
Tolworth	2001–02
TAC Whitefield Road, Bristol	2001–02
St. Budeaux 52 MQs	2001–02
Frater Metal Tents	2001–02
Sutton Coldfield—St. Georges Bks—TA	2001–02
Locking	2001–02
Aston Down	2001–02
Arras Lines Catterick Garrison	2002–03
Little Roodee MQs	2002–03
RAF Burtonwood (PHASES)	2002–03
Hilton JV	2002–03
Watton USVF MQs Phase 1 (20 units)	2002–03
Watton USVF MQs Phase 2 (15 units)	2002–03
Watton USVF MQs Phase 3 (39 units)	2002–03
Pease Hill Development Site	2002–03
Helensburgh Churchill Estate (50)	2002–03
Forres MQs—Pilmuir Estate (60)	2002–03
Glasgow, Wellesley House	2002–03
Farnborough Aerodrome—TAC Lease	2002–03
Queen Elizabeth Bks, Church Crookham	2002–03
Rushgrove St. Woolwich	2002–03
TAC Slough	2002–03
TAC Cobham	2002–03
TAC East Ham	2002–03
TAC Finchley	2002–03
TAC Heston	2002–03

Major disposals 2001–02 to date

HMS Mercury-Leydene	2002–03
Land at Wyvern Barracks (North Site)	2002–03
Portsdown Main	2002–03
RNCF Holton Heath	2002–03
ABRO Ashford Barracks (cash in 3 Tranches AP1, AP1 2 and AP1 1(03–04)	2002–03
Peel Circus Corsham	2002–03
Stafford Site 3	2003–04
Kitchener House ACF, Lammascote Road	2003–04
Gilwern House Chester (Land & House)	2003–04
Deysbrook Barracks Liverpool	2003–04
St. Athan	2003–04
Chicksands pt	2003–04
Wyton MQs—Somerset Road	2003–04
Stiles Way Antrim	2003–04
Rosyth, 2–50 (evens) 13–23 (odds) Grampian Road	2003–04
RE Lines/St. Lucia	2003–04
Hayes Repository PPP	2003–04
Hospital Hill Aldershot Health Ctr Site	2003–04
RAF Manston	2003–04
Staff College Bracknell (tranches to Feb 2009)	2003–04
Highwood Bks TAG Dulwich	2003–04
TAG Centre Gillingham	2003–04
TAG Greenhithe	2003–04
19 USAF Properties & 5 Langton	2003–04
SEF, Exeter	2003–04
Stirling—Drip Camp	2004–05
Longcross Bks—balance	2004–05
RAF West Drayton	2004–05
Alma Dettingen	2004–05
TAC Dulwich	2004–05
Long Marston	2004–05
TAC St. Albans	2004–05
Edinburgh TAG Chesser Crescent	2004–05

Information on vacant property is not held centrally nor in the form requested and could therefore only be provided at disproportionate cost. However, a list of the Department's surplus property is regularly placed in the Library of the House.

Departmental Staff

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many women there are in senior positions in his Department. [205719]

Mr. Caplin: The Cabinet Office collects and publishes annually statistical information on the civil service by Department. These include data on the number of women in senior positions in Departments.

The latest available information at April 2004 is available in the Library and on the civil service website at the following addresses. http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management_information/statistical_information/statistics/publications/xls/gender_apr04_4nov04.xls.

http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management_information/statistical_information/statistics/publications/xls/disability_apr04_4nov04.xls.

E-mails

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on his Department's policy regarding the retention of e-mails in electronic form *(a)* after and *(b)* up to 1 January 2005; and what instructions have been given regarding the deletion of e-mails prior to 1 January 2005. [206957]

Mr. Caplin: The policy on the retention of e-mails both before and after 1 January 2005 is that those which need to be kept should be saved into departmental records systems, either electronically or on paper. Those e-mails which do not need to be kept should be disposed of regularly to avoid overloading mailboxes. No central instructions have been given on the deletion of e-mails in relation to 1 January 2005.

Ethnic Minorities

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the extent to which his Department's policies meet the needs of ethnic minorities. [205717]

Mr. Caplin: A comprehensive assessment of the policies and practices of the Ministry of Defence regarding ethnic minorities, together with our future objectives, is set out in the Department's Race Equality Scheme published in May 2002. There have since been two progress reports published in 2003 and 2004. The scheme and both progress reports are available on the Ministry of Defence website at www.mod.uk/issues/racial_equality/index.html. Copies of both reports are available in the Library of the House.

We are in the process of reviewing the scheme in accordance with the legislative deadline of 31 May 2005 in order to replace it following the publication of the third and final progress report in 2005.

We are also currently in the process of piloting an equality proofing tool prior to making it available across the Department as a whole.

Freedom of Information

Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many staff in his Department were employed to deal with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 issues in *(a)* 2001, *(b)* 2002, *(c)* 2003 and *(d)* 2004; and how many staff are budgeted to deal with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 issues in (i) 2005 and (ii) 2006. [205037]

Mr. Caplin: In the Head Office policy directorate the number of permanent staff employed on Freedom of Information work in previous years, in 2004, and currently budgeted for future years, is as set out in the following table.

	Number of staff
2001	3
2002	6
2003	8
2004	10
2005	12
2006	12

'FOI Focal Points' have been set up across the Department to help raise awareness of and oversee preparations for FOI. However, this has not involved the employment of dedicated new FOI staff. In addition, it is potentially the role of all civilians and armed forces personnel in the Department to respond to FOI requests for information.

Gulf War Illnesses

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will set up a fund from which to make ex gratia payments on a pro-rata basis to all those veterans of the first Gulf war who have made successful claims to be suffering from Gulf war-related illnesses. [206913]

Mr. Caplin: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 20 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1371–72W to the hon. Member for Portsmouth South (Mr. Hancock).

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will reassess the claims of those Gulf war veterans whose claims to be suffering from Gulf war-related illnesses have been rejected. [206914]

Mr. Caplin: As I announced on 29 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 354, the Ministry of Defence will investigate the 100 or so rejected cases involving Gulf-related illness, where they can be identified.

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make it his policy to refer to the symptoms with which veterans of the first Gulf war are suffering as gulf war syndrome. [206920]

Mr. Caplin: Specific diseases, disorders, or medical conditions and medical syndromes each have common features such as a set of physical signs and/or symptoms that distinguish them from other medical conditions. Gulf veterans do not present with an identifiable and distinct pattern of symptoms or signs.

The consensus of the international scientific and medical community following extensive research on the matter is that there is insufficient evidence to enable the ill-health reported by 1990–91 Gulf veterans to be characterised as a unique Gulf related illness or syndrome.

The Medical Research Council came to the same conclusion in their report published in May 2003 following their independent scientific review of all the UK research work carried out into Gulf veterans' illnesses. We do not, therefore, refer to the symptoms reported as being "Gulf war syndrome".

Gym Provision

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many gyms are available to the staff in the Department; and what the cost of providing them was in the last year for which figures are available. [204366]

Mr. Caplin: There are currently 273 gyms recorded in the Ministry of Defence's Defence Property Gazetteer. Information about the cost of providing them is not held centrally nor in a form which can be made available without incurring disproportionate cost.

Infantry Battalions

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list *(a)* the approved strength and *(b)* the actual strength of each of the infantry battalions. [201593]

Mr. Caplin *[holding answer 6 December 2004]*: The establishment and strength (as at November 2004) of each of the 38 British infantry battalions (i.e. excluding the Gurkhas) are as shown in the following table:

Battalion	*Establishment*	*Strength*
The Guards Division		
1 Grenadier Guards	560	650
1 Coldstream Guards	585	660
1 Scots Guards	620	620
1 Irish Guards	560	515
1 Welsh Guards	560	545
The Scottish Division		
1 Royal Scots	560	480
1 Royal Highland Fusiliers	560	515
1 King's Own Scottish Borderers	560	490
1 Black Watch	605	545
1 Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders	580	485
1 Highlanders	620	490
The Queen's Division		
1 Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment	620	615
2 Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment	560	550
1 Royal Regiment of Fusiliers	620	585
2 Royal Regiment of Fusiliers	560	530
1 Royal Anglian Regiment	585	565
2 Royal Anglian Regiment	560	550
The King's Division		
1 King's Own Royal Border Regiment	560	500
1 King's Regiment	620	540
1 Prince of Wale's Own Regiment	585	575
1 Green Howards	560	510
1 Queen's Lancashire Regiment	560	565
1 Duke of Wellington's Regiment	620	515
The Prince of Wales's Division		
1 Devonshire and Dorset Regiment	585	540
1 Cheshire Regiment	585	505
1 Royal Welch Fusiliers	585	550
1 Royal Regiment of Wales	620	585
Royal Gloucestershire, Berkshire and Wiltshire Regiment	560	545
1 Worcestershire and Sherwood Foresters Regiment	560	505
1 Staffordshire Regiment	620	540
The Light Division		
1 Light Infantry	620	520
2 Light Infantry	560	530
1 Royal Green Jackets	560	535
2 Royal Green Jackets	560	530
The Parachute Regiment		
1 Para	580	570
2 Para	580	540
3 Para	580	540
The Royal Irish Regiment		
1 Royal Irish Regiment	560	500

The establishment figures refer to the number of posts within a battalion that may be filled by infantry personnel (officers and soldiers). Therefore, it excludes posts that are filled by attached personnel of other Arms and Services such as chefs, clerks, etc. Establishments will also vary depending on the particular role of a battalion; for example, armoured infantry battalions have larger establishments than light role infantry battalions. The figures are rounded to the nearest five.

The strength figures refer to actual numbers of trained infantry personnel within a battalion. The data was collected on 1 November 2004 and has been rounded to the nearest five. To allow for direct comparison with the establishment, figures on strength do not include officers and soldiers who are posted to the battalion but who are serving away from the battalion, nor personnel from other Arms and Services who are attached to the battalion. Figures are for the 35 Line Battalions and 3 Para Battalions. The two Gurkha Battalions have been excluded.

The excess in strength compared to establishment for the Grenadier Guards, Coldstream Guards and Scots Guards is accounted for by the Public Duty Company currently attached to each of these battalions.

Iraq (Territorial Army)

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what representations he has received from members of the Territorial Army on the length of their tours of duty in Iraq. [207380]

Mr. Caplin: I am unaware of direct representations to Ministers from TA personnel on the length of their tours of duty in Iraq, although several requests have been received from reservists wishing to extend their tours of duty on other overseas operations and in one or two instances representations have been made by Members of the House.

IT (Disciplinary Procedures)

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many staff in his Department have *(a)* received official warnings and *(b)* faced disciplinary procedures following breaches of IT policy in each year since 1997. [205811]

Mr. Caplin: Information is not held centrally on the number of Ministry of Defence staff that have received official warnings following minor disciplinary breaches of IT policy, and could only be provided at disproportionate cost. The number of MOD civilians that have faced disciplinary procedures following major disciplinary breaches of IT policy in each year since 1997 is as follows:

	Number
1997	0
1998	6
1999	5
2000	9
2001	3
2002	5
2003	6
2004	2

Lost/Stolen Property

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the property belonging to his Department that has *(a)* been stolen and *(b)* been reported lost in each year since 1997, broken down by type of article. [206370]

Mr. Caplin: Reported cases of stolen property are held centrally on a summary basis only and relate to suspected theft by Crown Personnel of stores and equipment. Cases are not recorded or grouped by property type and are often recorded, especially in respect of lower value items, as multiples or combinations of items such as tools, clothing, foodstuffs etc. Providing a response in the form requested and for the period concerned could be undertaken only at disproportionate cost.

Manning/Record Offices

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many people are employed in the Army's manning and records offices, broken down by area and location. [206621]

Mr. Caplin: The Army's manning and records offices collocated in Glasgow between December 1996 and July 1997, to become part of the Army Personnel Centre (APC). The APC employs a total of 884 staff (164 military and 720 civilian personnel) in three business areas: the Manning and Career Management Division, Chief of Staff and Civil Secretariat. With the exception of six staff in London, all APC personnel are based in Kentigern House, Glasgow.

Medals

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence for which *(a)* campaigns and *(b)* wars, medals were issued in each of the last five years; which medals were made of (i) silver and (ii) cupro-nickel; and how many were made in each case. [205002]

Mr. Caplin: The following British medals have been instituted for campaign service since the end of the Second World War. It is not possible to determine how many of each medal has been issued, as such information has not been recorded.

Medal	*Clasp*	*Metal*
Campaign Service		
Naval General Service Medal 1915–62		
	S.E. Asia	Silver
	Minesweeping 1945–51	
	Palestine 1945–48	
	Bomb and Mine Clearance 1945–53	
	Bomb and Mine Clearance 1945–46	
	Bomb and Mine Clearance Mediterranean	
	Malaya	
	Yangtze 1949	
	Canal Zone	
	Cyprus	
	Near East	
	Arabian Peninsula	
	Brunei	
	Brunei	

Medal	*Clasp*	*Metal*
General Service Medal 1918–62	S.E. Asia 1945–46	Silver
	Palestine 1945–48	
	Bomb and Mine Clearance 1945–49	
	Bomb and Mine Clearance 1945–56	
	Malaya	
	Canal Zone	
	Cyprus	
	Near East	
	Arabian Peninsula	
	Brunei	
Africa General Service Medal	Kenya	Silver
General Service Medal 1962	Borneo	Silver
	Radfan	
	South Arabia	
	Malay Peninsula	
	South Vietnam	
	Northern Ireland	
	Dhofar	
	Lebanon	
	Mine Clearance	
	Gulf	
	Kuwait	
	Northern Iraq and Southern Turkey	
	Air Operations Iraq	
Accumulated Campaign Service Medal		Silver
Operational Service Medal—Sierra Leone		Silver
Operational Service Medal—Afghanistan		Silver
War Service		
Korea Medal		Cupro-nickel
South Atlantic Medal		Cupro-nickel
Gulf Medal		Cupro-nickel
Iraq Medal		Cupro-nickel

Military Afloat Reach and Sustainability Project

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects the Military Afloat Reach and Sustainability project to complete its concept phase. [199834]

Mr. Ingram: The Military Afloat Reach and Sustainability project is currently in transition from the concept phase to the assessment phase. The timing is being considered in the Department's current planning round.

Napalm

Mrs. Mahon: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to his answer of 6 December 204, *Official Report*, column 339W, on napalm, whether substances similar to napalm have been used by the Coalition *(a)* during and *(b)* since the recent war in Iraq. [204263]

Mr. Ingram: The UK has not used napalm (or similar substances) during or since the end of decisive combat operations in Iraq. Furthermore, the US has confirmed that they also have not used napalm (or similar substances) during or since the end of decisive combat operations in Iraq.

Nimrod MRA4

Mr. David Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects the Nimrod MRA4 to be fully in service; and if he will make a statement. [205942]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 20 December 2004]:* The Nimrod MRA4 Design and Development contract is progressing with the first flight of the second aircraft, PA2, having taken place on 15 December. However, the way ahead for this project is subject to industry demonstrating satisfactory performance at acceptable prices. The in service date for the aircraft is 2009.

Official Documents

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what his Department's policy is in relation to the storage of documents and the use of shredders; and whether this policy has been reviewed in the past 12 months. [206735]

Mr. Caplin: The Ministry of Defence's policy on archiving records is that those required for medium to long term use and possible permanent preservation or those for which there is no storage space locally, should be archived. This policy has not been reviewed in the last 12 months, although some changes have been required in terms of its practical implementation due to changes in archive storage provision. The policy on the use of shredders follows central Government guidelines and relates to the type of shredder required securely to destroy documents with particular levels of sensitivity. This policy has also not been reviewed in the last 12 months.

Press Officers

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many press officers are employed in the Department. [206525]

Mr. Caplin: On 21 December 2004 there were 17 press officers employed in the Ministry of Defence's central press office in London.

This figure relates solely to those press officers employed in the Department's central press office in London. The information does not include those employed as press officers in Regional Press Offices, Defence Agencies, the Permanent Joint Headquarters, single Service Commands or at unit level, some of whom have a press officer task in addition to their main role. Accurate information on this is not held centrally and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Provisions (Beef)

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what percentage by weight of beef supply contracts for his Department and its agencies for each year since 1997 were sourced from *(a)* British and *(b)* Scottish herds. [207598]

Mr. Caplin: During the period 1997–2001, 54 per cent. of the beef purchased for consumption by the armed forces in the United Kingdom was sourced from Britain. Of that total, 40 per cent. came from Scottish Herds.

During the period 2002–04,46 per cent. of the beef purchased for consumption by the armed forces in UK was sourced from Britain. Of that total, 70 per cent. came from Scottish Herds.

Regular Reserve

Mr. Keith Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what percentage of the regular reserve have *(a)* received statutory notice of compulsory mobilisation and *(b)* been accepted into mobilised service for operations overseas since 1998. [205447]

Mr. Caplin *[holding answer 16 December 2004]:* No Royal Fleet Reserve personnel have been mobilised for operations overseas since 1998.

Since 1998, the RAF has only mobilised regular reservists in 2003 to support Operation TELIC. 511 call-out notices were served on members of the RAF ex-regular reserve of which 165 individuals were accepted into mobilised service. Expressed as a percentage 1.3 per cent. of the RAF ex-regular reserve was served with a call-out notice of which 0.4 per cent. of the RAF ex-regular reserve were accepted into service.

For the Army the figures requested cannot be compiled without resorting to a manual trawl or records and personnel files. This could be completed only at disproportionate cost.

Staff Numbers

Mr. Keith Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what the average number of *(a)* military and *(b)* civilian full-time equivalent staff employed by the (i) Defence Academy, (ii) Defence Estates, (iii) Dep Chief Defence Staff (Commitments), (iv) Director Special Forces, (v) Defence Geographic and Imaging Intelligence Agency, (vi) Veterans Agency, (vii) Dep Chief Defence Staff (Personnel), (viii) Defence Dental Agency and (ix) Defence Housing Executive management groups was in financial year 2003–04; [205472]

(2) what the average number of *(a)* military and *(b)* civilian full-time equivalent staff employed by the (i) Armed Forces Personnel Administration Agency, (ii) Policy Director, (iii) Dep Chief Defence Staff (Equipment Capability), (iv) Chief of Defence Intelligence, (v) Defence Intelligence and Security Centre, (vi) Defence Medical Services Department and (vii) Defence Medical Education and Training Agency management groups was in financial year 2003–04; [205473]

(3) what the average number of *(a)* military and *(b)* civilian full-time equivalent staff employed by the (i) Internal Costs, (ii) Programme Account and (iii) Nuclear management groups was in financial year 2003–04; [205474]

(4) what the average number of *(a)* military and *(b)* civilian full-time equivalent staff employed by the (i) Flag Officer Training and Recruiting, (ii) HQ and (iii) Naval Secretary management groups was in financial year 2003–04; [205476]

(5) what the average number of *(a)* military and *(b)* civilian full-time equivalent staff employed by the (i) Army Personnel Centre, (ii) Army Training and Recruitment Agency, (iii) Service Children's Education and (iv) Primary Health Care management groups was in financial year 2003–04; [205477]

(6) what the average number of *(a)* military and *(b)* civilian full-time equivalent staff employed by the (i) Adjutant General, (ii) Army Programme, (iii) General Staff, (iv) QVS and (v) DYRMS management groups was in financial year 2003–04; [205478]

(7) what the average number of *(a)* military and *(b)* civilian full-time equivalent staff employed by the (i) Personnel Management Agency, (ii) Core HQ and (iii) Training Group Defence Agency management groups was in financial year 2003–04; [205479]

(8) what the average number of *(a)* military and *(b)* civilian full-time equivalent staff employed by the (i) Fleet, (ii) General Officer Commanding (Northern Ireland), (iii) Command Field Army, (iv) Joint Helicopter Command, (v) Land Support and (vi) Command Regional Forces management groups was in financial year 2003–04; [205480]

(9) what the average number of *(a)* military and *(b)* civilian full-time equivalent staff employed by the (i) 1 Group, (ii) 2 Group, (iii) 3 Group and (iv) Deputy Commander-in-Chief management groups was in financial year 2003–04; [205481]

(10) what the average number of *(a)* military and *(b)* civilian full-time equivalent staff employed by the (i) British Forces Cyprus, (ii) British Forces Gibraltar, (iii) Permanent Joint Headquarters, (iv) Sovereign Base Areas Administration and (v) British Forces Falkland Islands management groups was in financial year 2003–04; [205482]

(11) what the average number of *(a)* military and *(b)* civilian full-time equivalent staff employed by the (i) Defence Fuels Group, (ii) Defence Communication Services Agency, (iii) DG Equipment Support (Land), (iv) DG Equipment Support (Air) and (v) Defence Transport and Movements Agency management groups was in financial year 2003–04. [205483]

Mr. Caplin: The available information on numbers of military and civilian personnel analysed by budgetary grouping and Defence Agency for 2003–04 is contained in tables 2.2 and 2.6 of United Kingdom Defence Statistics 2003 and 2004, copies of which are available in the Library of the House.

Swan Hunter

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what factors underlay the decision not to assist Swan Hunter with the overrun in budget to build the Largs Bay and Lyme Bay vessels at its Wallsend yard; and if he will make a statement. [199991]

Mr. Ingram: The Government's decision on how to deal with the delays and cost overruns in the design and construction of these vessels will be based on consideration of value for money. The Royal Navy has a continuing requirement for these ships and our assessments so far suggest that the best value for money would be offered by re-negotiating our contract with Swan Hunter; so it is not true to say at this stage that we are not prepared to assist the company. However, the detailed discussions we are having with Swan Hunter and with BAE Systems—which is building the two follow-on vessels—remain commercially sensitive and I am therefore withholding any further information in accordance with Exemption 7a of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information.

Travel Costs

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the cost of travel within the UK for the Department was in each year since 1997; and how much of this was spent on *(a)* hire cars, *(b)* helicopter hire, *(c)* hotel accommodation and *(d)* subsistence. [206473]

Mr. Caplin: I will write to the hon. Member and a copy of my letter will be placed in the Library of the House.

Youth Organisations

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the future funding arrangements for youth and cadet organisations sponsored by his Department in *(a)* Northern Ireland and *(b)* in the rest of the United Kingdom. [206580]

Mr. Caplin: The Ministry of Defence will continue to fund and support the youth and cadet organisations in the UK. All cadet organisations are funded using the normal Ministry of Defence financial planning procedures, which take account of operational priorities, competing programmes and resources available. The Sea Cadets also receive other funds independent of the Ministry of Defence by virtue of their status as a registered charity.

CABINET OFFICE

Abandoned Vehicles (Morecambe Bay)

Geraldine Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster whether the Duchy of Lancaster has responsibility for the removal of abandoned vehicles on the sands of Morecambe Bay. [206047]

Mr. Milburn *[holding answer 20 December 2004]*: The Duchy of Lancaster office does not have responsibility for the removal of abandoned vehicles on Morecambe Bay sands.

Christmas Cards

David Davis: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many hours of the Department's staff time were taken up in preparation of Christmas cards in 2004. [205144]

Mr. Miliband: This information is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate costs. Cabinet Office Communication Group, have responsibility for co-ordinating and ordering all departmental Christmas cards, but individuals are responsible for completing and despatching them.

David Davis: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many of the Department's staff have responsibility for preparing Christmas cards. [205145]

Mr. Miliband: The Cabinet Office's Communication Group co-ordinates and orders the departmental Christmas card. This role is part of the normal workload for one member of staff.

David Davis: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what percentage of the Department's official Christmas cards included a contribution to charity in their cost; and which charities benefited from such a contribution. [205146]

Mr. Miliband: The Cabinet Office has one official Christmas card, which has included in the cost a contribution to the charity WaterAid. WaterAid receives between 15p and 25p for every Christmas card sold.

David Davis: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what the cost of postage was for the Department's official Christmas cards in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004. [205147]

Mr. Miliband: The costs for postage for the Departmental Christmas card are not held centrally. Items posted by the Department normally go by 2nd Class Post. The Department also makes use of other cost effective distribution options such as the Internal Distribution Service (IDS).

David Davis: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what the cost was of purchasing the Department's official Christmas cards in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004. [205148]

Mr. Miliband: The cost of purchasing the official departmental Christmas card in 2003 was £3,599.03 for 4,100 cards. The cost of purchasing the official departmental Christmas card in 2004 was £5,505.00 for 5,200 cards. Both prices included VAT at 17.5 per cent. The expenditure incurred in the purchase and postage of official Christmas cards is made in accordance with the departmental guidance on financial procedures and propriety, based on the principles set out in Government Accounting.

David Davis: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many official Christmas cards were sent out by the Department in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004. [205149]

Mr. Miliband: The Department ordered 4,100 cards in 2003 and 5,200 cards in 2004.

Civil Contingencies Secretariat

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office if he will make a statement on the work of the Civil Contingencies Secretariat. [206849]

Mr. Miliband: The Civil Contingencies Secretariat (CCS) was set up in 2001 to improve the UK's resilience against disruptive challenges, working in partnership with others at the national, regional and local levels to enhance arrangements for anticipating, assessing, preventing, preparing for, responding to and recovering from all types of disruptive challenge.

The CCS drives the delivery of improved resilience across the Government and the public sector by making sure that the Government can continue to function and deliver public services during a crisis. It achieves this through risk assessment and horizon-scanning activity to identify and assess potential and imminent disruptive challenges to the domestic UK, and by working with others to improve the capability of all levels of Government, the wider public sector and the private and voluntary sectors to manage potential challenges.

A key focus of the CCS's work in 2004 has been the Civil Contingencies Act. This, along with its non-statutory measures, delivers a single statutory framework for civil protection in the UK by enhancing arrangements at the local and regional level, and providing an up to date Emergency Powers framework. protection in the UK by enhancing arrangements at the local and regional level, and providing an up to date Emergency Powers framework.

Civil Service Pension Scheme

Lady Hermon: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what percentage of contributions to the Civil Service Premium Scheme went towards pension entitlement in the last period for which figures are available. [206862]

Mr. Miliband: Employees who are members of the Premium Scheme make contributions of 3.5 per cent. of pensionable pay. Employers meet the balance of the cost. Employers' contributions currently average 13.3 per cent. Following a quadrennial review by the Scheme Actuary, employers' contributions are being increased and in 2005–06 will average 18.5 per cent. of pensionable pay.

The Premium Scheme was introduced in October 2002 and is part of the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme. Some 18 per cent. of members are in Premium, 79 per cent. in Classic and 3 per cent. in Classic Plus. Employer contributions are the same for all three schemes. Employee contributions are 1.5 per cent. for Classic and 3.5 per cent. for the other schemes.

Lady Hermon: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many retired civil servants are in receipt of a pension; and what the total cost was in the last year for which figures are available. [206866]

Mr. Miliband: There were 418,000 retired civil servants in receipt of a pension at 31 March 2004. Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme payments to retired civil servants totalled £2,338 million in 2003–04.

Lady Hermon: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many civil service *(a)* widows and *(b)* widowers are in receipt of a civil service pension of less than (i) £1,000 and (ii) £2,000 per annum. [206867]

Mr. Miliband: The information on Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme payments is shown in the table.

31 March 2004	*Widows*	*Widowers*
Number receiving under £1,000 a year	34,200	3,600
Number receiving £1,000 to £1,999.99 a year	30,100	1,400

Lady Hermon: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many retired civil servants are in receipt of a Civil Service pension of less than *(a)* £1,000 and *(b)* £2,000 per annum. [206868]

Mr. Miliband: The information on Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme payments is shown in the following table.

As at March 2004	*Retired employees*
Number receiving under £1,000 a year	45,600
Number receiving £1,000 to £1,999.99 a year	66,400

Lady Hermon: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many civil service *(a)* widows and *(b)* widowers are in receipt of a civil service pension; and what the cost was in the last year for which figures are available. [206869]

Mr. Miliband: There were 121,000 widows and 6,000 widowers in receipt of a civil service pension at 31 March 2004. Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme payments to widows and widowers totalled £328.7 million in 2003–04.

Conferences

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many conferences were *(a)* attended by officials from the Cabinet Office, *(b)* cancelled by and *(c)* facilitated by the Cabinet Office in each year since 1997; and what the (i) cost to the Cabinet Office and (ii) location was in each case. [205768]

Mr. Miliband: The information requested is not held centrally. To obtain the information would incur disproportionate cost.

Departmental Credit Cards

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many credit cards for official expenditure are held by the Cabinet Office. [206447]

Mr. Miliband: The Cabinet Office use two types of credit card for official expenditure. The Government Procurement Card (GPC), which has been in use within the Department since May 2002, and the Corporate

Card, which has been in use since September 2000. Currently there are 16 active GPC card holders and nine Corporate card holders.

All official credit card expenditure is undertaken strictly in accordance with the rules contained in the Cabinet Office Management Code.

Departmental Events

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office if she will list the *(a)* conferences, *(b)* seminars, *(c)* workshops, *(d)* exhibitions and *(e)* press conferences which have been sponsored by the Office and which took place on non-Office premises in each of the last two years giving the (i) title, (ii) purpose, (iii) date and (iv) cost of each. [202327]

Mr. Miliband: The information requested is not held centrally. To obtain the information would incur disproportionate cost.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what estimate she has made of the cost of *(a)* new builds, *(b)* demolition rebuilds and *(c)* private finance initiative projects in the Office in each of the last two years. [202310]

Mr. Miliband: The Emergency Planning College (Easingwold) has spent around £400,000 in 2002–03 and around £4 million in 2003–04 on new builds.

It is estimated that since May 2002, the CMPS's Residential Learning and Development Centre (Sunningdale) Public Private Partnership/Private Finance Initiative partner has spent around £12 million on demolition, new builds and building and site enhancements at Sunningdale Park.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what her estimate is of the cost of *(a)* ministerial cars and drivers and *(b)* taxis to the Office in each of the last two years. [202311]

Mr. Miliband: I have asked Nick Matheson, Chief Executive of the Government Car and Despatch Agency to write to the hon. Member with details of the cost of ministerial vehicles provided to this Department in 2003–04. Copies of his letter will be placed in the Library and will be printed in the *Official Report*.

The amount used on taxis in the financial year 2002–03 was £354,284.95.

In 2003–04 a number of changes were made to the accounting system in order to rationalise the number of accounts and details of taxi costs ceased to be held centrally.

All official travel in the Department is undertaken strictly in accordance with the rules contained in the Cabinet Office Management Code.

Letter from Nick Matheson to Mr. John Bercow, dated 10 January 2005:

The Minister for the Cabinet Office has asked me in my capacity as the Chief Executive responsible for the Government Car and Despatch Agency to reply to your Parliamentary Questions about the cost of ministerial vehicles provided to various government departments.

The figures for 2003–04 are as follows:

Department	*Number of cars*	*Annual contracted value (£)*
Cabinet Office	8	472,100
DCA	4	230,400
DCMS	4	235,600
DEFRA	5	286,000
DfES	7	384,900
DFID	2	107,600
DfT	4	232,200
DTI	5	275,500
DWP	6	339,400
FCO	4	214,500
DoH	6	425,200
HM Treasury	5	295,400
Home Office	7	408,900
Law Officers	2	106,400
NIO	5	362,600
ODPM	6	321,800
Privy Council	1	56,000
Scotland Office	1	49,200
Wales Office	2	130,100
Total	84	4,933,800

Notes:

1. Northern Ireland Office (NIO) figures include costs for two temporary Ministers while the Northern Ireland Assembly is suspended.
2. Cabinet Office figures include cars at the Prime Minister's Office, the Leader of the House of Lords, the Commons Chief Whip and the Minister without Portfolio.
3. The Government Car Service no longer provides services to the Ministry of Defence.

Information for 2002–03 is shown in the attached table. This information was originally provided in response to a Parliamentary Question to the hon. Member for Arundel & South Downs (Mr Flight). A copy of my letter to him is also enclosed. Corresponding information for the Law Officers for 2002–03 (which was not included in the reply to Mr Flight) is also included in this table.

Information about a number of vehicles used within Government is not disclosed under Exemption 1*(a)* of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information on the grounds that its disclosure could harm national security.

2002–03

Department	*Number of cars*	*Annual contracted value (£)*
Cabinet Office	8	440,800
ODPM	6	333,600
DCMS	4	230,500
DfES	6	317,000
DFID	2	92,200
DTI	6	321,700
FCO	5	258,000
Department of Health	6	325,500
HM Treasury	5	285,800
Home Office	7	399,900
Lord Chancellor's Department	4	233,200
Law Officers	2	105,900
MOD	1	63,000
Northern Ireland Office	4	205,100
Privy Council Office	2	120,800
Scotland Office	2	100,400
Wales Office	2	127,200
DEFRA	5	285,900
DfT	3	173,700
DWP	6	328,600
Total	86	4,748,800

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office if she will make a statement on energy costs incurred by the Office in each of the last two years. [202312]

Mr. Miliband: Energy costs incurred by the Cabinet Office in each of the last two years are shown in the table.

	Spend—Total all fuels (£)
2002–03	1,066,030
2003–04	1,092,469

The Cabinet Office reduced its total energy consumption in 2003–04. The increase in spend for that year was due to increases in electricity and heating fuel prices which more than outweighed a substantial reduction in consumption.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what her estimate is of the cost of building refurbishment carried out by the Office in each of the last two years. [202314]

Mr. Miliband: Excluding the Civil Service College's site at Sunningdale Park, the Cabinet Office spent £14,647,629 on building refurbishment in 2002–03 and £7,600,684 in 2003–04.

A Private Finance Initiative/Public Private Partnership in relation to the Civil Service College's Sunningdale Park site commenced on 13 May 2002. From that date, the College's private sector partner has spent around £12 million on an overall investment plan. This has included expenditure on refurbishment projects.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what the cost of refurbishing each Ministerial Private Office was in the last two years. [202315]

Mr. Miliband: During 2003–04 the Ministerial Private Office of the Minister for the Cabinet Offices underwent repair and redecoration at a cost of £11,980.

No refurbishment works were undertaken in 2002–03.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office (1) what the total external spending by the Office was on private finance initiative (PFI) consultants in each of the last two years; how many full-time equivalent consultants were employed over this period; how many billed consultancy days there were per year; what the implied average cost of each PFI consultant was; how many consultancy firms were used by the Office over this period; and if she will make a statement; [202318]

(2) what the total external spending by the Office was on public-private partnership (PPP) consultants in each of the last two years; how many full-time equivalent consultants were employed over this period; how many billed consultancy days there were per year; what the implied average cost of each PPP consultant was; how many consultancy firms were used by the Office over this period; and if she will make a statement. [202328]

Mr. Miliband: The Cabinet Office has not used any consultants in connection with private finance initiative (PFI) projects in 2003–04 or 2004–05.

The Cabinet Office has not incurred consultancy costs in connection with other public private partnership (PPP) activities.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what his estimate is of the cost of *(a)* ministerial cars and drivers and *(b)* taxis for Duchy administrative staff in each of the last two years. [202472]

Mr. Milburn: The Duchy of Lancaster is not responsible for the cost or provision of a ministerial car or driver to the post of the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.

For information for the periods 2002–03 and 2003–04, I refer the hon. Member to the response given by my hon. Friend the Minister for the Cabinet Office today.

The cost of taxis to the Duchy of Lancaster is included within the travel costs itemised in the Duchy's accounts, copies of which are available in the Library.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what the cost of refurbishing his ministerial private office was in each of the last two years. [202475]

Mr. Milburn: Responsibility for the ministerial private office of the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster rests with the Cabinet Office.

I refer the hon. Member to the response given by my hon. Friend the Minister for the Cabinet Office today.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how much has been spent on entertainment by the Cabinet Office in each year since 1997, broken down by *(a)* food, *(b)* alcohol, *(c)* staff and *(d)* accommodation. [204342]

Mr. Miliband: Details of the Department's spend on entertainment in each year since 1997 are shown in the following table.

£ thousand

	Entertainment expenditure
1997–98	192
1998–99	170
1999–2000	276
2000–01	277
2001–02	254
2002–03	307
2003–04	381

Information breaking down the expenditure by the categories requested cannot be readily retrieved without incurring disproportionate cost.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how much has been spent by his office on *(a)* new furniture and *(b)* hired furniture in each year since 1997. [205619]

Mr. Miliband: The available information on the cost of furniture for the Cabinet Office is shown in the table.

	Cost (£)
2002–03	74,841.50
2003–04	134,788

It is not possible to provide information for all of the Cabinet Office estate for previous years as this is not held centrally and can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what the costs of refurbishments in the Cabinet Office were in each year since 1997; and what the planned expenditure is for 2005–06. [205680]

Mr. Miliband: The costs of refurbishment of London offices of the Cabinet Office are shown in the table.

	Cost (£)
1998–99	1,974,788
1999–2000	1,470,524
2000–01	28,082,638
2001–02	35,994,741
2002–03	26,559,481
2003–04	11,216,534

Notes:

1. Figures include fees, furniture/office equipment and VAT.

2. There was no expenditure in 1997–98

There are no refurbishment projects currently in progress and none are planned to start in 2005–06. Other projects which are in the initial planning phase have yet to receive the go ahead and funding.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how much has been spent by her Office on lighting in each year since 1997. [205747]

Mr. Miliband: The figure is not held centrally and can be provided only at disproportionate costs.

European Constitution

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office if she will make a statement on the effect of the coming into force of the European Constitution on the operation of the Department with reference to *(a)* changes in legislative competence, *(b)* the extension of qualified majority voting, *(c)* the increased legislative role of the European Parliament, *(d)* the cost of implementation of regulations, *(e)* the requirements of adherence to the Charter of Fundamental Rights and *(f)* the quantity of legislation originating in the EU institutions. [200183]

Mr. Miliband: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my hon. Friend, the Minister of State for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Mr. MacShane) on Monday 29 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 10W.

Government Car Fleet

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what the cost of the Government car fleet was in the last year for which figures are available, broken down by *(a)* maintenance, *(b)* drivers, *(c)* taxes, *(d)* insurance, *(e)* fuel, *(f)* fines for traffic offences broken down by offence and *(g)* congestion charges. [204439]

Mr. Miliband: The responsibility for the provision of ministerial cars and drivers has been delegated under the terms of the Framework Document to the Government Car and Despatch Agency. I have asked its Chief Executive Mr Nick Matheson to write to the hon. Member. Copies of his letter will be placed in the Library and will be printed in the *Official Report*.

Letter from Nick Matheson to Mr George Osborne dated 10 January 2005:

The Minister for the Cabinet Office has asked me in my capacity as the Chief Executive responsible for the Government Car and Despatch Agency (GCDA) to reply to your Parliamentary Question about the costs of running the Government Car Service.

In 2003–04 the Agency spent £505,000 on vehicle maintenance, £131,000 on vehicle insurance, £365,000 on fuel, £156,000 on the central London congestion charge and incurred £5,216,000 in drivers' salaries and associated costs. Vehicles in the Government Car Service are exempt from paying vehicle road licence fees.

During 2003–04 the Government Car Service received 135 Parking Penalty Notices. Of these 60 were successfully challenged and £3,610 was paid in fines. GCDA will only pay parking fines where these have been incurred in the course of our operations. GCDA and its employees have no dispensation to break the law but parking restrictions within central London may make it impossible sometimes to deliver secure or sensitive documents to buildings or allow people with a high public profile to attend or leave buildings without putting themselves or secure documents at risk. In these cases GCDA will pay the fine.

All our drivers are required to obey the law at all times whilst on duty and are held personally responsible for any speeding offences that they may commit. Consequently, the Agency has not been fined for, nor paid, any speeding offences.

Gyms

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many gyms are available to staff in the Department; and what the cost of providing them was in the last year for which figures are available. [204378]

Mr. Miliband: The Department has a gym, situated in one of its buildings in Whitehall, which is available for the use of all staff. The Central Office of Information also provides gym facilities at its building in Lambeth for the use of its staff. In both cases accommodation and utilities are provided free, with all other costs being met by gym members. The cost to the Department for the provision accommodation and utilities are included in the overall budget and they are not separately identifiable.

Gym facilities are provided at the Centre for Management and Policy Studies (CMPS) Residential Learning and Development Centre in Sunningdale and at the Emergency Planning College (EPC) at Easingwold. Although primarily provided for use by those attending training courses, the facilities are also available to staff working at those sites. There is no direct cost to the Department from the provision of gym facilities at the CMPS Sunningdale site. The EPC does not cover its full costs and the specific shortfall from the provision of gym facilities could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

The Cabinet Office is fully committed to providing staff with pro-active occupational health policies and fully supports health awareness programmes as provided by the Department of Health.

Human Rights Act

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many cases have been brought against the Office under the Human Rights Act 1998; and what the cost has been in *(a)* legal fees to defend cases and *(b)* compensation payments. [202325]

Mr. Miliband: No cases have been brought against the Cabinet Office or its agencies under the Human Rights Act 1998. It is possible there has been reliance on the Human Rights Act 1998 in cases against the Cabinet Office not themselves brought under the Human Rights Act but it would incur disproportionate costs to determine if this is so.

Ministerial Cars

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many ministerial cars are being operated by the Government Car Service; and if she will break down the fleet by *(a)* manufacturer, *(b)* model and *(c)* country of manufacture. [204037]

Mr. Miliband: The responsibility for the provision of ministerial cars and drivers has been delegated under the terms of the Framework Document to the Government Car and Despatch Agency. I have asked its Chief Executive Mr Nick Matheson to write to the hon. Member. Copies of his letter will be placed in the Library and will be printed in the *Official Report*.

Letter from Nick Matheson to Mr Oliver Heald dated 10 January 2005:

The Minister of State for the Cabinet Office has asked me in my capacity as the Chief Executive responsible for the Government Car and Despatch Agency to reply to your Parliamentary Question about the number of ministerial cars provided and their country of manufacture.

The figures for 2003–04 are as follows:

Manufacturer	*Model*	*Number*	*Country of Manufacture*
Rover	Rover 75	4	United Kingdom
	Rover 45	2	United Kingdom
Jaguar	Jaguar/Daimler	3	United Kingdom
Ford	Mondeo	47	Belgium
	Galaxy	2	Portugal
Toyota	Prius	2	Japan
Vauxhall	Omega	13	Germany
	Omega	1	Belgium
	Vectra	6	Germany
Nissan	Primera	2	United Kingdom
Total		82	

Parliamentary Questions

Dr. Cable: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what target her Department sets for the maximum time to respond in full to a parliamentary question; and what percentage of its parliamentary answers have failed to meet this target in each parliamentary Session from 1997–98 to 2003–04. [200524]

Mr. Miliband: Departments aim to ensure that Members receive a substantive response to their Named Day question on the named day and to endeavour to answer Ordinary written questions within a working week of being tabled. Unfortunately, this is not always possible but the Cabinet Office makes every effort to achieve these timescales.

For information relating to the 2003–04 parliamentary Session up to April 2004, and the 2002–03 parliamentary Session, I refer the hon. Member to the answer which the then Minister for the Cabinet Office gave the hon. Member for Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross (John Thurso) on Monday 14 June 2003, *Official Report*, columns 705–06W.

The information requested for the 2003–04 parliamentary Session is shown in the tables.

Named Day PQs

	Total for Session 2003–04
Number due for answer	81
Number answered on day named	48
Percentage answered on day named	59%

Ordinary Written PQs

	Total for Session 2003–04
Number due for answer	415
Number answered within five working days	257
Percentage answered within five working days	62%

Regulatory Impact Assessment

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office which regulations were not accompanied by a Regulatory Impact Assessment in the measurement of the level of compliance with the Regulatory Impact Assessment process conducted by her Department in *(a)* December 2003 and *(b)* June. [205423]

Mr. Miliband: Based on a snapshot of regulatory impact assessment (RIA) compliance in November 2003, and published on 16 December 2003, the level of compliance was 100 per cent.

Based on a snapshot of RIA compliance in June 2004, and published on 22 July 2004, the level of compliance was 96 per cent. RIAs were missing at that time for proposals on identity cards and the Commission for Racial Equality's (CRE) Code of Practice on employment. An RIA for ID cards was subsequently published alongside the draft Bill on 29 November 2004. An RIA on the CRE's Code of Practice will be published when the Code is laid in Parliament in the New Year.

Copies of all RIAs are available in the Library.

Security Passes

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office (1) how many departmental security passes have been *(a)* lost and *(b)* stolen in each year since 1997; [204444]

(2) how many instances of people attempting to use security passes that were recorded as lost or stolen have been recorded in each year since 1997. [204445]

Mr. Miliband: I refer the hon. Member to the answer which the then Minister for the Cabinet Office, my hon. Friend the Member for Paisley, South (Mr. Alexander) gave to the hon. Member for Winchester (Mr. Oaten) on 5 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1048W.

The number of lost passes are shown in the table.

	Number of lost passes
2003	61
2004	15

The number of stolen passes are shown in the table.

	Number of stolen passes
2003	10
2004	31

No incidents have been recorded in this period of attempted use of lost or stolen passes.

Sickness Absence

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many days sick leave were taken by civil servants in the Department in each year since 1997; and what the sickness absence rate was in each year. [204513]

Mr. Miliband: Sick absence figures for the Cabinet Office are published annually in the report "Analysis of Sickness Absence in the Civil Service". Table A of the report gives details of both the average working days absence per staff year and the number of staff years on which that calculation is based for the Cabinet Office . Copies of the latest report for 2003 are available in the Library. Reports for years 1999 to 2002 are available on the Cabinet Office website at: http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management_information/conditions_of_service/caje/publications/index.asp#sickness.

Cabinet Office is committed to managing sick absence effectively. It has in place robust procedures that are supported by comprehensive in house guidance and training for managers and individuals.

Telephone Numbers

Mr. Tyler: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (1) how many non-geographic 0870 telephone numbers are in use by his Department; and what services can be accessed by calling each of them; [205833]

(2) how much revenue his Department has received from the use of non-geographic 0870 telephone numbers for the period 1 October 2003 to 30 September 2004. [205843]

Mr. Milburn: The Duchy of Lancaster office does not have any 0870 telephone numbers.

Telephone Usage

Norman Baker: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what her policy is on the use of telephones in her Department by members of staff for personal *(a)* domestic and *(b)* international calls; and if she will make a statement. [206023]

Mr. Miliband: The Cabinet Office permits the occasional and reasonable use of official telephones, except mobile telephones, for personal domestic calls. Personal use of official telephones for international calls is not permitted.

Norman Baker: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what measures she has taken to ensure that telephones in her Department are not used by staff for making unauthorised personal calls to international numbers. [206024]

Mr. Miliband: The Cabinet Office does not allow the personal use of telephones for international calls.

Direct dialling of international calls is only permitted from specific extensions. International calls can only otherwise be made logging the call through the government operator.

Norman Baker: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what the estimated cost to her Department of unauthorised personal calls made by members of staff to *(a)* domestic and *(b)* international numbers was in the last period for which figures are available. [206022]

Mr. Miliband: All call charges for domestic and international calls from fixed lines on the Cabinet Office estate are encompassed in a standard annual charge per extension irrespective of the number or destinations of calls made.

Television Subscriptions

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many publicly funded pay television subscriptions there are in official residences for which her Department is responsible; and what the cost is of each. [204422]

Mr. Miliband: None.

PRIME MINISTER

Baghdad Visit

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Prime Minister on what day his Office chose 21 December as the date for his visit to Baghdad. [207462]

The Prime Minister: Although discussions began earlier, the date for my visit to Baghdad was fixed in the second half of November.

E-mails

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Prime Minister if he will make a statement on his Office's policy regarding the retention of e-mails in electronic form *(a)* after and *(b)* up to 1 January 2005; and what instructions have been given regarding the deletion of e-mails prior to 1 January 2005. [206951]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave the hon. Member for Guilford (Sue Doughty) on 21 December, *Official Report*, column 1605W.

Foreign Press Articles

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Prime Minister pursuant to his answer of 13 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 822W, on foreign press articles, if he will make it his policy that articles written by members of the United Kingdom Government are deposited in the Library. [207106]

The Prime Minister: I have nothing further to add to my answer of 13 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 822W.

Home Secretary

Mr. Heald: To ask the Prime Minister whether the Secretary of State for the Home Department had received his seal of office when he issued his two written ministerial statements concerning International Exercise and the case of A and Others and the Secretary of State for the Home Department on 16 December; and if he will make a statement. [207565]

The Prime Minister: The formalities associated with Ministerial appointments, such as the receipt of a seal of office, are not relevant to the making of statements in the House. Her Majesty the Queen had approved the appointment.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Prime Minister on how many occasions between 31 March 2002 and 31 March 2003 his special advisers travelled abroad in an official capacity; what places were visited; and how much each visit cost. [207190]

The Prime Minister: Information on the travel and accommodation for special advisers who accompanied me on overseas visits is included in the list of Overseas Travel by Cabinet Ministers 2002–03, copies of which are available in the Libraries of the House.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Prime Minister if he will list the attributable newspaper articles written by his special advisers in their official capacity between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004. [207764]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 6 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 326W.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Prime Minister whether his special advisers have used official resources for party political activity. [207765]

The Prime Minister: Special advisers are required to conduct themselves in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers.

Working Time Regulations

Mr. Brady: To ask the Prime Minister pursuant to his answers on Working Time Regulations of 13 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 823W, and 20 December 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1353–4W, for what reasons it was not possible to provide details of the number and percentage of officials working in his private office who have worked more than a 48 hour week at any time in the last 12 months. [207614]

The Prime Minister: As I set out in my original answer of 13 December, *Official Report*, column 823W, all officials in my Office who might work more than 48 hours a week as defined by the Working Time Regulations have signed a waiver.

HEALTH

Clinical Guidelines

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether clinical guidelines issued by his Department are designed to set minimum standards. [200107]

Mr. Hutton: The Department does not issue clinical guidelines. Clinical guidelines are developed and issued by the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE). NICE'S clinical guidelines bring clarity to complex areas of diagnosis and care by providing recommendations for good practice that are based on the best available evidence of clinical and cost effectiveness.

Standards for Better Health, the first ever set of national standards for health provided under the National Health Service, requires by developmental standard D2 that:

> " . . . patients receive effective treatment and care that . . . conform to . . . NICE guidance".

NICE guidance in this context includes its clinical guidelines.

Correspondence

David Winnick: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he expects to reply to the letter of 1 November from the hon. Member for Walsall, North concerning a constituent, reference 5006112. [201472]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 2 December 2004]:* A reply was sent on 6 December 2004.

Defibrillators

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many uses of NHS defibrillators located in non-NHS premises were reported in the six months to September. [206635]

Miss Melanie Johnson: There have been a total number of 31 deployments from April—September 2004 inclusive. This includes precautionary deployments and can be broken down as follows:

Six precautionary—an automatic external defibrillator was taken to the event although not used.

25 uses.

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what system is in place for recording uses of NHS defibrillators located in non-NHS premises. [206636]

Miss Melanie Johnson: When an event occurs it is recorded internally by the automatic external defibrillator (AED). This information is then downloaded by the manufacturer and is forwarded to the national defibrillator team, where the event is reviewed. To accompany this, an AED event form is completed. This form captures all information relating to the event and it is completed by staff at the site where the AED is housed and then forwarded to the Department. On receipt, this information is entered into a database.

From a national perspective, there is also a database, which is coordinated by the Resuscitation Council (UK). This database collates information from all AEDs out in the community.

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS defibrillators were in place in non-NHS premises on 30 September. [206637]

Miss Melanie Johnson: There were 681 automatic external defibrillators in place within 110 sites in England by 30 September 2004.

Dental Laboratories

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what assessment his Department has made of the likely change in the number of jobs in dental laboratories in England as a result of industry restructuring in response to the Options for Change policy; [204645]

(2) what assessment his Department has made of the impact of the new dentists' contract on *(a)* patients and *(b)* the dental laboratories industry; [204646]

(3) what assessment his Department has made of the impact of the new dentists' contract on dental laboratories in personal dentist service pilot sites; [204647]

(4) what assessment his Department made of the impact of the Options for Change policy on the amount of laboratory work commissioned by personal dentist service dentists. [204648]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Development of the Government's reforms to national health service dentistry was informed by experience of the personal dental services (PDS) scheme and Options for Change pilots. A key feature of these pilot schemes, which will also be carried forward to new contractual arrangements, is the replacement of the item-for-service method of remunerating dentists with local contracts. Primary care trusts will negotiate contracts with dental practices to meet patients' overall oral health care needs. An evaluation of a sample of PDS schemes suggest that dentists may prescribe fewer intricate dental appliances under local commissioning, although this may only be a temporary effect whilst they adjust to new contractual and remuneration arrangements. Dentists should prescribe appliances for which there is a clinical need.

Dentistry

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when discussions with the Governments of *(a)* Poland, *(b)* Germany, *(c)* Denmark and *(d)* Spain on the recruitment of dentists began. [202279]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Discussions began with Poland, Denmark and Spain in 2004. Activity in Germany has only just begun and approaches to the Government will be made shortly.

Sir Paul Beresford: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the findings are from the personal dental services pilot sites on bad debt; and whose responsibility bad debt will be after the NHS dental base contract comes into effect. [206686]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 21 December 2004]:* Currently the responsibility for bad debts due to non-payment of patient charges rests with the provider dentist in the general dental services and personal dental services (PDS) except where, under the PDS, the practice is owned by the primary care trust. Bad debt has not been raised as an issue by providers in the PDS. When the new contractual arrangements are implemented a new system of patient charges will be required. We have received a report from the NHS dentistry patient charges working group, chaired by Harry Cayton, which we are considering.

Mr. Damian Green: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS dentists there were per head of the population in England in each year since 1997. [206728]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The number of national health service dentists (headcount) per 10,000 population in England is shown in the table for September in each of the years 1979 to 2004. NHS dentists comprise those dentists working in the General Dental Service (GDS), Hospital Dental Service (HDS), Community Dental Service (CDS) and Personal Dental Service (PDS). Dentists working in more than one dental service are included in each service apart from dentists working in both PDS and GDS who are counted in the GDS only.

	Dentists per 10,000
1997	4.17
1998	4.27
1999	4.37
2000	4.43
2001	4.53
2002	4.58
2003	4.66
2004	4.67

Mr. Damian Green: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what information he has about the number of patients paying for private dental treatment in each year since 1997. [206730]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Information on private dental treatment is not routinely available to the Department. Information on private dental expenditure and national health service/private patient mix is given in Tables 3.5 and 3.6 of the Office of Fair Trading publication "The private dentistry market in the UK", a copy of which is available in the Library.

Departmental Advertisements

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many television advertisements his Department has commissioned on *(a)* terrestrial and *(b)* satellite television channels in the last 12 months; and what the cost was in each case; [201305]

(2) what criteria are used by his Department to determine *(a)* on which satellite television channels advertisements on behalf of his Department or its agencies are screened and *(b)* the frequency of screenings of advertisements; [201310]

(3) what discussions he has held with the devolved administrations in relation to the content, frequency and timing of television advertising placed by his Department on UK-wide satellite broadcasting channels. [201315]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The table shows the number, with costs, of advertisements commissioned by the Department's communications directorate for screening on terrestrial and satellite television during 2003–04.

Campaign title	*Number of advertisements*	*Terrestrial Costs (£ thousand)*	*Satelite costs (£ thousand)*
Flu immunisation	1	620	Nil
Childhood immunisation	1	953	Nil
National Health Service careers	1	1,532	661
Tobacco	12	9,523	2,813
Social care/work	3	1,523	355

The criteria used for all campaigns are individually assessed to take into account the campaign objectives, the target audience and any specific regional factors.

The media buyers secure the most cost effective advertising slots to match the brief at the most competitive prices within the budget allocated.

Frequency of screening will depend on a consideration of how many times an audience needs to see the message before it will achieve the desired effect and the size of the audience for any particular television spot.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much has been spent by his Department on *(a)* indoor bought plants, *(b)* indoor hired plants, *(c)* outdoor bought plants and *(d)* outdoor hired plants in each year since 1997. [205594]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The provision of planting to the Department is undertaken as part of the Departments cleaning contract. The cost of this service since 1998 is shown in the following table.

	Amount (£)
1997–98	No figures available
1998–99	13,668.00
1999–2000	14,385.75
2000–01	14,430.08
2001–02	12,383.10
2002–03	12,692.68
2003–04	13,073.45

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much has been spent by his Department on *(a)* new furniture and *(b)* hired furniture in each year since 1997. [205612]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The cost of furniture, including seating, incurred by the Department is shown in the table.

Financial year	*Amount (£)*
2001–02	2,690,495.16
2002–03	1,918,122.11
2003–04	437,597.07

No information is available for previous years.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the cost of refurbishments in his Department was in each year since 1997; and what the planned expenditure is for 2005–06. [205674]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Departmental expenditure on refurbishments in the period since 1997 is shown in the table.

	Amount (£)
1997–98	1,980,802
1998–99	1,271,733
1999–2000	1,453,483
2000–01	652,456
2001–02	559,009
2002–03	2,087,270
2003–04	2,882,993
2004–05	[1]2,012,974
2005–06	[2]2,000,000

[1] Anticipated outturn.

[2] Planned expenditure.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much the Department spent on first-class travel in each year since 1997. [206578]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Departmental expenditure on first class travel (rail and air) is shown in the table:

	Amount (£)
2000	3,671,300
2001	3,738,629
2002	5,052,611
2003	5,557,417
2004	5,399,355

A great proportion of this cost relates to travel between the Department's offices in London and Leeds. Expenditure for previous years is not available.

Departmental Files

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) whether it is the policy of the Department to retain for the benefit of future *(a)* historians and *(b)* applicants under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 the same (i) complete categories of files, (ii) numbers of files and (iii) representative examples of files from categories of files destroyed as had been preserved prior to the passage of that Act; [203294]

(2) how many departmental files have been destroyed in each of the past five years; [203295]

(3) what changes have been promulgated in each of the past five years to the guidelines or other criteria for the retention or destruction of departmental files. [203296]

Ms Rosie Winterton: In accordance with the Public Records Act 1958 S.3, the selection of records of enduring historical value for permanent preservation at the national archives (TNA) will continue to take place in the Department under the guidance and supervision of TNA staff. The Department will also comply with the Code of Practice on Records Management, issued by the Lord Chancellor under S.46 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, which underlines the importance of having clear selection policies and disposal schedules in place.

In accordance with its selection policies and disposal schedules, the Department has destroyed the following numbers of files in each of the last five years:

Period	*Number destroyed*
1 January–31 December 2000	89,511
1 January–31 December 2001	37,421
1 January–31 December 2002	42,231
1 January–31 December 2003	52,824
1 January–30 November 2004	39,404

Since 1999, the Department has produced one schedule for the disposal of records which are specific to its administrative activities. It also disposes of its records in accordance with over twenty guidance notes produced by TNA over the last five years, covering disposal schedules, managing records in the electronic environment, as well as overarching records management guidance.

Departmental Properties

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many properties are held by the Department; what total floor space these properties provide; how many properties are vacant; and how much floor space vacant properties comprise. [206488]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department and its Executive Agencies occupy 41 properties comprising 105,836.66 square metres of floor space. None of the properties are vacant.

E-mails

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what his Department's policy is in relation to the storage and deletion of e-mails; and whether this policy has been reviewed in the past 12 months; [206764]

(2) what his Department's policy is in relation to the storage of documents and the use of shredders; and whether this policy has been reviewed in the past 12 months. [206765]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department continues to implement well established policies and procedures for the review and disposal of files and documents in accordance with its administrative needs and the Public Records Act.

E-mail messages that form part of the official record are saved for as long as business needs require and stored corporately in accordance with departmental record management procedures.

Ethnic Minorities

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the extent to which his Department's policies meet the needs of ethnic minorities. [205706]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Department committed to transforming the health and social care system so that it produces faster, fairer services that deliver better health and social care and tackle inequalities. Achieving sustainable improvements in health and services for black and minority ethnic people is part of the overall drive to promote equity of access to national health service services.

The Department's strategy for meeting the needs of minority ethnic people is to set action on race equality within the overall framework for planning and delivering the Department's priorities. The Department has a detailed programme of work under way to develop policies and promote good practice to improve the delivery of health and social care services among black and minority ethnic groups. Some of the areas in which the Department has initiated progress are around mental health, coronary heart disease, cancer and diabetes.

The Department is also committed to the collection of ethnic origin monitoring information using the 2001 Census categories as part of the process of monitoring and improving access to services within the health and social care sector.

In 2002, the Department published its race equality scheme, which sets out how the Department planned to meet the general and specific duties placed on it by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. Work is currently underway to review the scheme.

Freedom of Information

Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many staff in his Department were employed to deal with Freedom of Information Act 2000 issues in *(a)* 2001, *(b)* 2002, *(c)* 2003 and *(d)* 2004; and how many staff are budgeted to deal with Freedom of Information Act 2000 issues in (i) 2005 and (ii) 2006. [205039]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The numbers of staff directly employed by the Department to take forward the implementation and application of Freedom of Information Act within the Department, including those budgeted for future years, are shown in the following table.

	Staff (full-time equivalent)
2001	1.45
2002	2.15
2003	2.35
2004	2.65
2005	3.15
2006	2.55

Other staff are involved in the implementation and application of the Freedom of Information Act, but it is difficult to identify precisely the number and it is potentially part of every civil servant's role to respond to freedom of information requests.

General Dental Council

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he expects to publish a response to the consultation on proposals for strengthening the General Dental Council. [204270]

Ms Rosie Winterton: It is expected that the consultation report will be published in the spring.

Healthcare Industry Task Force

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has to implement the recommendations of the Healthcare Industry Task Force report of November. [205994]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 20 December 2004]:* The healthcare industries task force delivered its final report on 17 November 2004. It included nine key outputs. Work to implement these is under way and progress will be reported to a new strategic group to be led by the co-chairs of the task force, my noble Friend, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health (Lord Warner) and Sir Christopher O'Donnell, Chief Executive of Smith and Nephew. Copies of the report, "Better health through partnership: a programme for action", have been placed in the Library.

Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority *(a)* has paid and *(b)* plans to pay to Media Strategy to help them prepare for oral evidence sessions before Parliamentary select committees between October 2003 and April 2005. [205661]

Miss Melanie Johnson: I am informed by the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority that it employed Media Strategy to *(a)* assist members and senior officials to prepare for the House of Commons Science and Technology Committee's inquiry into human reproductive technologies and the law and *(b)* provide specialist presentation skills training. The fee for this work was £5,600.

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health for what purposes the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority employs consultants; and how much it has paid to consultants since June 2001 and plans to pay up to April 2005. [205662]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA) employs consultants to provide specialist knowledge and specific advice that is not available within its existing workforce. The areas covered have included consultation on specific policy work, including advice on consultations with the public and surveys in connection with reviewing existing policies and developing new policies, information technology expertise and assistance with the setting up and design of the HFEA's register project, including advice on centre billing, setting up the audit programme and the minimum data set for the register.

The HFEA has advised me that fees paid to consultants since 2001–02 are as shown in the table.

Consultants fees paid by the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority: 1 April 2001 to 31 March 2005[1]

	Fee (£000)
2001–02[2]	451
2002–03	624
2003–04	405
2004–05 to date[3]	72
Forecast to 31 March 2005	55

Notes:

[1] Consultants work has covered specific policy work and information technology, including work on the HFEA's register.

[2] Expenditure is for the full financial year as information required to establish the proportion of spend made after June 2001 could only be obtained at a disproportionate cost.

[3] Information covers period 1 April 2004 to 16 December 2004.

Source:

Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority.

Identity Cards

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what estimate he has made of the cost of installing biometric card readers *(a)* in total and *(b)* as an average per facility for (i) general practitioner surgeries and (ii) hospitals and other health centres; and what estimate he has made of the annual cost of maintenance for biometric card readers across the NHS; [206196]

(2) what representations he has made to the Home Office regarding the *(a)* timescale and *(b)* cost of introducing biometic card readers across the NHS. [206197]

Mr. Hutton: No decisions have yet not been made about whether biometric card readers will be used in the NHS, whether in connection with the national identity cards scheme or for any other purpose. The Home Office have published figures on the cost of biometric card readers. A decision to install biometric card readers in the NHS would only be taken if the benefits outweighed the costs.

Manor Park/Clarendon Park

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when his solicitors will confirm the transfer of designated public land at Manor Park and Clarendon Park to Epsom and Ewell borough council. [206158]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 21 December 2004]:* Manor Park and Clarendon Park were sold for residential development by the Secretary of State for Health in April 1998 and 1999 respectively and at that time responsibility for both sites passed to the acquiring consortia. The provision of open space within these sites and their transfer to public ownership is a matter for negotiation between the new owners and Epsom and Ewell borough council.

Milk Tokens

Mr. Stunell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health for what reasons the Milk Token Hotline on 7 December had a pre-recorded message informing callers that all outstanding tokens would be issued by 29 November; when he will change the message; how many overdue milk tokens remained to be issued on 7 December; and if he will make a statement. [203976]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 13 December 2004]:* On 1 November 2004, responsibility for the distribution of milk tokens to all beneficiaries of income support and income-based job seekers allowance transferred from the Department of Work and Pensions to the Department of Health. However, technical difficulties have led to a high volume of calls to the token distribution unit, which sends out tokens on the Department of Health's behalf.

The message was left on the helpline to inform beneficiaries that they should have received their December tokens by 29 November. Any caller who had not received their milk tokens would then know to stay on the line to seek further assistance. All beneficiaries notified to us by the Inland Revenue (recipients of child tax credit) and the Department for Work and Pensions were mailed by 29 November.

To allow for Christmas, the next mailing was sent out a week early, so the message advises that the next mailing should have been received by 21 December.

MRSA

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many babies have contracted MRSA in each of the last five years. [203206]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Health Protection Agency's voluntary reporting system is the only national dataset providing information by age. Published data for children aged under one year is shown as follows.

Reports of methicillin resistant staphylococcus aureus blood isolates in children aged under one year

	Number
1999	34
2000	35
2001	39
2002	38

Source:
Health Protection Agency

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many cases of MRSA have been reported at Northwick Park Hospital in each of the last three years; how many of those cases proved fatal; and if he will make a statement. [203598]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Information on methicillin resistant *staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) bloodstream infections (bacteraemias) is collected by National Health Service trust rather than by hospital. Northwick Park is part of North West London Hospitals NHS Trust where reports are given as follows:

April to March	*MRSA bacteraemia reports*
2001–02	59
2002–03	44
2003–04	55

The mandatory MRSA surveillance does not collect information on deaths.

NHS (Ethical Recruitment)

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will ban the NHS from using recruitment agencies who have not signed up to the Code of Practice on Ethical Recruitment. [204952]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 14 December 2005]:* The Government encourages compliance with the code of practice sensibly and with the least possible bureaucracy. Strategic health authorities are working with NHS employers, the national health service employers' organisation, to ensure collaborative and ethical international recruitment, including compliance with the code of practice. I am satisfied that the NHS is complying with the code and that a direction is not necessary.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many written questions for his Department were unanswered when Parliament prorogued; and how many of the unanswered questions were tabled in each of the previous months of the 2003–04 Session. [201552]

Ms Rosie Winterton: None.

Patient Environment Action Teams

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he or a member of his Ministerial team *(a)* received and *(b)* approved the publication of the Patient Environment Action Team scores. [205863]

Mr. Hutton: My noble Friend, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health, the Lord Warner, was notified of the results of the 2004 patient environment action team assessments on 26 November 2004 and these were published on 7 December 2004.

Public Bodies

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the membership is of the *(a)* National Biological Standards Board, *(b)* National Radiological Protection Board and *(c)* Dental Practices Board; what the (i) cost of salaries and expenses to members and (ii) running costs of each body were in the last year for which figures are available; and how many staff are employed to service each body. [203823]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The membership of the National Biological Standards Board, the National Radiological Protection Board and the Dental Practices Board are shown in the tables.

National Biological Standards Board

Prof. Gordon William Duff	Chairman
Prof. David Latchman	Member
Prof. J. Patrick Sissons	Member
Prof. John Hughes	Member
Sir John Skehel	Member
Prof. Derek Harold Calam	Member
Prof. James Feeney	Member
Mr. Alan Heath	Member
Mr. Allan James Robertson	Member
Miss Gillian Noble	Member
Mr. S. Thomas	Member

National Biological Standards Board

Dr. J. C. Petricianni	Member
Prof. J. H. Darbyshire	Member
Mr. Martin Hindle	Member
Dr. L. Tsang	Member
Prof. C. Lee	Member

National Radiological Protection Board

Sir William Stewart	Chairman
Mrs P. M. Castle	Member
Dr. P. Darragh	Member
Prof. W. Gelletly	Member
Mrs F. A. Heaton	Member
Dr. R. A. Hunter	Member
Prof. W. R. Lees	Member
Prof. M. D. Mason	Member
Mr. J. C. White	Member

Dental Practices Board

Mary Wyllie (Dentist)	Chair
Ruby Austin (Dentist)	Vice Chair
John Taylor (Chief Executive)	Member
Sandeep Lakhanpaul (Dentist)	Member
David Ferns (Dentist)	Member
Carol Ferguson	Non Dental Member
Derek Spratt	Non Dental Member

For each of the three bodies, the cost of salaries and expenses to members, the total operating costs and the staff employed are shown in the table.

Name of body	*Cost of salaries and expenses to members 2003–04 (£)*	*Total operating costs 2003–04 (£ million)*	*Staff employed—whole time equivalent posts—baseline 31 March 2004*
National Biological Standards Board	31,000	18	308
National Radiological Protection Board	21,163	16.3	349
Dental Practices Board	60,000	23.8	321

Further details are in the bodies' annual reports for 2003–04, which are available in the Library.

Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency's expert working group report on selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors was based on *(a)* consideration of raw clinical data and *(b)* summaries provided by the pharmaceutical companies. [205375]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The findings of the committee on safety of medicines' expert working group on selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors were based on detailed analysis of a number of sources of data including clinical trial data provided by pharmaceutical companies, studies on the general practice research database, the published literature and individual reports from health professionals and patients. Full details of the data considered and the conclusions of the expert working group are presented in its report, which is available on the website of the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency at www.mhra.gov.uk. Copies of the report are available in the Library.

Sickness Absence

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many days sick leave were taken by civil servants in the Department in each year since 1997; and what the sickness absence rate was in each year. [204514]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The data on sickness within the Department is contained in the annual report, Analysis of Sickness Absence in the Civil Service, published by the Cabinet Office. Table A of the report gives details of both the average working days absence per staff year and the number of staff years on which that calculation is based on. The most recent of which, for calendar year 2003, was announced by written ministerial statement on 1 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 1WS and copies placed in the Library. Reports for 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002 are available on the Cabinet Office web site at: http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management information/conditions of service/caje/publications/index.asp#sickness.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if he will list the attributable interviews that his Department's special advisers gave to *(a)* newspapers, *(b)* journals, *(c)* books and *(d)* other media in their official capacity between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004; [201428]

(2) if he will list the attributable *(a)* articles and *(b)* contributions that his Department's special advisers made to (i) newspapers, (ii) journals, (iii) books and (iv) other media in their official capacity between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004. [201453]

Ms Rosie Winterton: There were none in this period. All special advisers' contacts with the media are conducted in accordance with the requirements of the "Code of Conduct of Special Advisers".

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many complaints were made by departmental civil servants regarding the conduct of special advisers between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004. [203469]

Ms Rosie Winterton: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my hon. Friend, the then Minister for the Cabinet Office (Ruth Kelly), on 8 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 578W.

Statins

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research he has commissioned on the possible impact on the incidence of side effects of over-the-counter sales of statins. [202548]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The safety profile of simvastatin is well established and based on 14 years of experience as a widely used prescription only medicine. The committee on safety of medicines (CSM) has reviewed all the relevant safety data and the results of a full public consultation exercise and concluded that it was safe for simvastatin 10 milligram to be supplied by pharmacists, according to a protocol that has numerous safeguards to ensure that patients are appropriately advised.

As with all medicines, the Medicines and Healthcare Regulatory Agency (MHRA) and the CSM continually monitor the safety of simvastatin. Doctors and pharmacists report suspected adverse drug reactions (ADRs) to medicines via the yellow card scheme. This system applies to both prescription and non-prescription medicines and will enable the continued monitoring of the safety of the medicine in pharmacy use.

The MHRA is exploring with the manufacturer the possibility of further research into the safety profile of simvastatin in over-the-counter use.

Telephone Numbers

Mr. Tyler: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much revenue his Department has received from the use of non-geographic 0870 telephone numbers for the period 1 October 2003 to 30 September. [205821]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 20 December 2004]:* The Department does not own any 0870 telephone numbers.

UVFGI Technology

Mr. Letwin: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the effects of using UVGI technology to combat pathogen levels in NHS hospitals. [205421]

Mr. Hutton: In December 2000, the Department commissioned a pilot study by the University of Leeds into ultraviolet disinfection of airborne bacteria in a United Kingdom hospital. This study concluded that, whilst there was a potential role for ultraviolet germicidal irradiation in hospital buildings, further research work was needed to establish the parameters within which the potential benefits can be realised. Consequently, a grant has been awarded by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council to investigate this in more depth. This study will address many of the research questions encountered in the pilot study.

In addition, the Health Protection Agency's rapid review panel reviewed a portable device that uses ultra-violet technology, but concluded that the device was unlikely to be of benefit.

Whittington Hospital

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if he will make a statement on the Jarvis-led private finance initiative contract for the Whittington hospital extension; and what action is being taken by his Department to ensure that the construction work is completed within a schedule agreed by all parties; [205027]

(2) when he expects the expansion of the Whittington hospital to be complete; and what discussions about the conclusion of the building work have been held by his Department with *(a)* Jarvis and *(b)* other contractors. [207693]

Mr. Hutton: The Department is monitoring the progress of this project and has provided advice to the Whittington National Health Service Trust. In any private finance initiative project, should a consortium member be unable to fulfil its contractual obligations it is, in the first instance, for the project's funders and other shareholders to remedy the situation. There are strong incentives for them to do this.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Benefit Fraud

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many cases of benefit fraud involved *(a)* false identities and *(b)* false claims without false identity in the last year for which figures are available; and how many prosecutions there were in each category. [207021]

Mr. Pond: The information is not available.

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of *(a)* the cost to his Department of identity fraud and *(b)* the number of people in each year since 1997, who have claimed benefits to which they are not entitled on the basis of a false identity. [206195]

Mr. Pond: We estimate that identity related benefit fraud costs the Department £50 million per annum. This figure is derived from national data produced by the Regional Benefit Review process, which by examining a percentage of cases is designed to uncover fraud and error in income support and jobseeker's allowance.

Information is not available as to how many people have claimed benefit on the basis of a false identity.

Benefits Processing (Aberystwyth)

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many representations he has received in support of his proposals to change benefits processing in Aberystwyth. [206978]

Jane Kennedy: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the Chief Executive of the Jobcentre Plus, David Anderson. He will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from David Anderson to Mr Simon Thomas dated 10 January 2005.

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question about how many representations he has received in support of the proposals to change benefit processing in Aberystwyth. This is something which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

I fully understand the concerns of our customers and staff over the proposed changes to the way we deliver our business. Whilst we have received no direct representations locally supporting our plans, I firmly believe that the move to Benefit Processing Centres is the best way to maintain a high quality service to our customers within the efficiency constraints we are faced with.

The new integrated service will be delivered from the site of the current Jobcentre, and I am confident that Jobcentre Plus will continue to offer the best possible service to customers in Aberystwyth. Indeed, through the extension of the Personal Adviser service to customers on inactive benefits we will be increasing the help we offer to some of our most disadvantaged customers.

As the timescales for these changes are agreed, the District Manager for West Wales will keep you fully informed.

Correspondence

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when the Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus will give a substantive reply to the letter of 8 October from the hon. Member for the Isle of Wight concerning Mr D Prescott. [206968]

Jane Kennedy: A reply was sent to the hon. Member on 30 December.

Documents

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his Department's policy is in relation to the storage of documents and the use of shredders; and whether this policy has been reviewed in the past 12 months. [206737]

Maria Eagle: The Department for Work and Pensions continues to implement well established policies and procedures for the review and disposal of files in accordance with its administrative needs and the Public Records Act.

Email messages that form part of the official record are saved for as long as business needs require and stored corporately in accordance with departmental record management procedures. Further email guidance is available on the National Archives website at: http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/electronicrecords/advice/pdf/managing_emails.pdf

Departmental policy on this has not changed within the past 12 months.

Homelessness

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on the support services offered by his Department to help homeless people find employment. [206590]

Jane Kennedy: The Department provides a range of services to help homeless people find employment, from support from personal advisers based in Jobcentres to specific initiatives such as Progress2work-LinkUP and Action Teams for Jobs. Additionally, homeless people can have early access to the New Deals and other national programmes.

Progress2work-Link-Up is being piloted in 22 Jobcentre Plus districts. The initiative is designed to include those who may experience multiple barriers to employment for whom it provides support into employment and to find accommodation. Ex-offenders, the homeless and those who misuse alcohol are included in this wider client group.

Jobcentre Plus communicates its help for the homeless via its network of advisers for whom it provides guidance about the problems facing homeless customers. This explains the role of staff in helping and advising such customers as well as acting as a signposting service to organisations which offer specialist help to homeless people. There is also guidance about the British Action on Homelessness (BAOH) and how its "Ready for Work" programme work placements are accommodated within the Intensive Activity Period of New Deal for Young People and New Deal 25 plus.

Jobcentre Plus also conducts joint work at a local level. A strand of most Local Strategic Partnerships centres on homelessness and employment and these partnerships provide the link between Jobcentre Plus and local authorities.

Housing Benefit

Ms Oona King: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many housing benefit claims in 2003-04 were subject to each rate of non-dependent deduction; at each rate, how many claimants were living in *(a)* council housing, *(b)* registered social landlord housing and *(c)* the private rented sector; and what each figure represents as a percentage of total housing benefit claims. [204469]

Mr. Pond: The information is in the table.

Housing benefit non-dependants by deduction type and tenure, Great Britain: May 2003

Thousands and percentages

	All tenures	*Registered social landlord*	*Local authority*	*Private*
Total with non-dependants	[1]270	80	158	32
As a percentage of all HB claimants	7.1%	2.1%	4.2%	0.9%
Of which:				
Attracting deductions for non-dependants	128	36	77	15
As a percentage of all HB claimants	3.4%	1.0%	2.0%	0.4%
Non-dependants:				
Total	[2]304	92	176	36
Attracting deductions	136	39	81	16
Status of non-dependants:				
In remunerative work	59	19	33	7
Of which:				
Gross income <£92	6	[3]2	4	[3]1
Gross income £92-£136.99	8	3	4	[3]1
Gross income £137-£176.99	12	4	6	[3]2
Gross income £177-£234.99	10	3	6	[3]1
Gross income £235-£292.99	6	[3]1	4	[3]1

Housing benefit non-dependants by deduction type and tenure, Great Britain: May 2003

Thousands and percentages

	All tenures	*Registered social landlord*	*Local authority*	*Private*
Gross income £293 and over	16	6	8	[3]2
Not receiving IS/JSA(IB) nor working	28	6	18	4
Receiving IS/JSA(IB), not in work	49	14	31	4
On Government Training Allowance, not in work	[4]—	[4]—	[4]—	[4]—
Unknown	[3]2	[4]—	[3]1	[4]—

Notes:

[1] This figure is the number of housing benefit recipients with at least one non-dependant.

[2] This figure is the total number of non-dependants.

[3] Figures under 2,500 are subject to a high degree of sampling variation and should be used only as a guide to the situation.

[4] Nil or negligible.

Notes:

1. The figures are based on a 1 per cent. sample and are therefore subject to a degree of sampling variation.
2. The data refers to benefit units, which may be a single person or a couple.
3. The caseloads are rounded to the nearest thousand, and percentages to one decimal place.
4. Housing benefit figures exclude any Extended Payment cases.

Source:

Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit Management Information System, Annual 1 per cent. sample, taken in May 2003.

Jobseeker's Allowance

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many hours per week were spent on average on job search activity by a jobseeker's allowance claimant in the last period for which figures are available. [206386]

Jane Kennedy: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus, David Anderson. He will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from David Anderson to Mr David Willetts dated 10 January 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question about the average amount of time spent on job search activities by people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA). This is something that falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

Information about the average weekly time JSA claimants spend on job search activity is not available. However, people claiming JSA are required to actively seek work and undertake minimum levels of job search activity to maintain their entitlement to JSA. It may be helpful if I explain this, and how we monitor compliance, in a little more detail.

People claiming JSA are usually required to undertake a minimum of three steps each week to look for work. These steps, which will vary depending on individual customer circumstances and the work they are seeking, are discussed and agreed at the new jobseeker interview, recorded in the Jobseeker's Agreement, and reviewed regularly. The Jobseeker's Agreement outlines the customer's job goal, the times and days they are available for work and those steps that, if taken, will offer the best chance of leading to a job. Having a Jobseeker's Agreement, signed by the customer and Adviser, is a requirement of entitlement to JSA.

After the new jobseeker interview, people are usually required to attend the Jobcentre fortnightly and, if they remain unemployed, will be expected to attend more in-depth interviews with a Personal Adviser at key stages. These customer contacts provide a regular opportunity to ensure people are actively seeking work and to see what help, if any, is required. When someone does not appear to be actively seeking work or undertaking the required level of job search activity, payment of JSA is withheld and the case referred to an independent decision maker.

I am sorry the specific information you have requested is not available, but I hope this response is nonetheless helpful.

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the *(a)* quarterly and *(b)* annual jobseeker's allowance claimant figures for 18 to 24-year-olds on the Isle of Wight are for the last five-year period; and if he will make a statement on recent trends. [207342]

Jane Kennedy: The UK has one of the strongest labour markets in the world. Through economic stability combined with policies to tackle barriers to work we have achieved the highest employment and the lowest unemployment in any of the major industrialised countries.

The number of people in work is up by two million since 1997 and unemployment is at its lowest level for nearly 30 years. Long-term youth unemployment has been virtually eradicated.

The information requested is in the table.

Number of 18 to 24-year-old jobseeker's allowance claimants in Isle of Wight Parliamentary constituency

	February	*May*	*August*	*November*	*Yearly average*
2000	880	525	485	540	610
2001	775	460	400	555	550
2002	725	465	395	535	530
2003	755	435	380	480	515
2004	680	430	385	475	495

Notes:

1. Figures have been rounded to the nearest 5.
2. Figures are not seasonally adjusted.
3. Annual figures have been based on a four quarterly average of February, May, August and November of the relevant year.

Source:

100 per cent. count of unemployment-related benefits, Jobcentre Plus computer systems (computer held cases only).

New Deal for Lone Parents

Jon Cruddas: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people are participating in the New Deal for Lone Parents in the Dagenham constituency. [207163]

Jane Kennedy: At the end of September 2004, 120 people were participating in the New Deal for Lone Parents in the Dagenham constituency.

Notes:
1. Latest available figures.
2. Figures are rounded to the nearest 10.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Civil Recovery Proceedings

Mr. Grieve: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how much has been spent on legal aid in relation to persons subject to civil recovery proceedings under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 since it came into force. [206768]

Mr. Lammy: To date, the Legal Services Commission has paid £131,223 in relation to persons subject to civil recovery proceedings under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002.

Mr. Grieve: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what sums have been repaid to the Legal Services Commission from monies recovered by the Assets Recovery Agency under civil recovery proceedings to reimburse the costs to the Legal Services Commission of funding the representation of those subject to such proceedings. [206803]

Mr. Lammy: The Legal Services Commission has not received any money from the Assets Recovery Agency under civil recovery proceedings to reimburse the costs of funding the representation of those subject to such proceedings. This is because neither the Access to Justice Act 1999 nor the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 has a mechanism for the Assets Recovery Agency to refund costs to the Legal Services Commission out of property recovered.

Under the Serious and Organised Crime Bill, it is proposed that the system will change to allow costs to be provided out of the assets themselves, rather than through legal aid.

Courts/Tribunals

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many people are employed by *(a)* Her Majesty's Magistrates Court Service Inspectorate and *(b)* the Council of Tribunals; what the running cost of each body was in the last year for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement on the future of each body. [203806]

Mr. Lammy: Her Majesty's Magistrates Courts Service Inspectorate's (MCSI) current staffing level is 32 full-time members of staff and nine standby (employed on fixed-term contracts guaranteeing 20 days work per year). We are also in the process of recruiting four additional inspectors to take forward our expanded inspection remit from April 2005.

The running costs for 2003–04 were £1.87 million.

MCSI, which inspects the administration of magistrates courts and the Children and Family Consultation and Support Service (CAFCASS), will migrate to a new inspectorate (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Court Administration (HMICA) (on 1 April 2005, as established by S58–61 of the Courts Act 2003). Its remit will be to:

> "inspect and report to the Lord Chancellor on the system that supports the carrying on of the business of the courts listed in subsection (2) and the services provided for those courts; inspect and report to the Lord Chancellor on the performance of CAFCASS functions".

The Act expands the remit to inspect the administration of magistrates courts, into the Crown and county courts as well. In the first instance HMICA will focus inspection activity on quality of service.

The Council on Tribunals, is an advisory non-departmental public body. At 31 March 2004 the Council on Tribunals employed 12 staff on a full-time equivalent basis. The Council also reimburses the salaries of three staff employed by the Scottish Executive at the Council's Scottish Committee office in Edinburgh. These three staff are not on DCA payroll.

The most recent published accounts for the Council are for the 2003–04 financial year in which the running costs were £1,056,406.

In July 2004 the White Paper "Transforming Public Services: Complaints, Redress and Tribunals" was published. The White Paper sets out how Government intends reforming the tribunal system. To compliment these reforms and the creation of a dedicated Tribunals Service, the Department for Constitutional Affairs intends to transform the existing Council on Tribunals into an Administrative Justice Council. In addition to taking over the existing role of the Council on Tribunals, the Administrative Justice Council will be charged with taking account of the broader landscape of administrative justice, reviewing performance, representing the views of users and ensuring that the relationships between courts, tribunals and ombudsmen are clear and complimentary.

Departmental Credit Cards

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many credit cards for official expenditure are held by his Department. [206441]

Mr. Lammy: My Department does not hold any credit cards for official expenditure.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the cost of travel within the UK for the Department was in each year since 1997; and how much of this was spent on *(a)* hire cars, *(b)* helicopter hire, *(c)* hotel accommodation and *(e)* subsistence. [206474]

Mr. Lammy: It is not possible to list how much was spent on *(a)* hire cars, *(b)* helicopter hire, *(c)* hotel accommodation and *(d)* subsistence by the Department without incurring disproportionate cost. However, total travel costs within the UK for the Department, which covers costs for the Court Service, the Public Guardianship Office (PGO) and the Department for Constitutional Affairs Headquarters (DCA HQ), are set out in the table.

Travel costs within the UK

	(£ million)
2004–05 (to 30 November)	4,070,863
2003–04	5,913,187
2002–03	5,035,694
2001–02	4,522,177
2000–01	4,169,902
1999–2000	4,237,897
1998–99	3,506,760

There has been an increase in travel costs for DCA since 2002–03 because of the increased responsibilities for the Department.

Information on 1997–98 is not readily available.

All Civil Service travel is undertaken in accordance with the rules set out in the Civil Service Management Code, copies of which are available in the Libraries of the House.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how much the Department spent on first class travel in each year since 1997. [206561]

Mr. Lammy: The costs for first class travel in each year since 1997 are not separately identifiable within the Department's accounts without incurring disproportionate costs.

All Civil Service travel is undertaken in accordance with the rules set out in the Civil Service Management Code, copies of which are available in the Libraries of the House.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many overseas trips, and at what total cost, have been made by his Department in each year since 1997; and what the costs of *(a)* flights, *(b)* internal travel, *(c)* hotel accommodation and *(d)* subsistence were of each trip. [206660]

Mr. Lammy: It is not possible for the Department to provide the full detailed information requested and what the costs of overseas *(a)* flights, *(b)* internal travel, *(c)* hotel accommodation and *(d)* subsistence were without incurring disproportionate costs. However, total overseas travel costs for the Department, which covers costs for Court Service, Public Guardianship Office (PGO) and the Department for Constitutional Affairs Headquarters (DCAHQ), are set out in the table:

Overseas Travel Costs

	(£000)
2004–05 (to 30 November)	110,214
2003–04	172,631
2002–03	145,257
2001–02	96,251
2000–01	153,737
1999–2000	103,449
1998–99	110,774

There has been an increase in travel costs since 2002–03, because of the increased responsibilities of the Department.

Information on the previous year is not readily available.

All Civil Service travel is undertaken in accordance with the rules set out in the Civil Service Management Code, copies of which are available in the Libraries of the House.

E-mails

Sue Doughty: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs (1) what his Department's policy is in relation to the storage and deletion of e-mails; and whether this policy has been reviewed in the past 12 months; [206732]

(2) what his Department's policy is in relation to the storage of documents and the use of shredders; and whether this policy has been reviewed in the past 12 months. [206733]

Mr. Leslie: The Department for Constitutional Affairs continues to implement well established policies and procedures for the review and disposal of files in accordance with its administrative needs and the Public Records Act.

E-mail messages that form part of the official record are saved for as long as business needs require and stored corporately in accordance with departmental record management procedures. Further email guidance is available on the National Archives web site at: http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/electronicrecords/advice/pdf/managing_emails.pdf

Llew Smith: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what guidance he has issued to Government departments in respect of the retention and deletion of e-mails; and what consideration was given to the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 in providing guidance. [207141]

Mr. Leslie: The Department for Constitutional Affairs' 'Guidance on Processing Requests', which is published on the internet at www.foi.gov.uk , states at Chapters 2 and 10 that it is the responsibility of all members of staff to manage their e-mail messages appropriately. This means staff must identify email messages that are records of their business activities and those that are not.

It is important that email messages that form part of the official record are saved for as long as business needs require and are moved from email accounts and personal folders and stored corporately in accordance with departmental record management procedures. Email messages that do not form part of the official record should be managed within the mailbox in the short term but permanently deleted when no longer required.

Full consideration was given to the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 when drafting this advice.

Entertainment Costs

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how much has been spent on entertainment by his Department in each year since 1997, broken down by *(a)* food, *(b)* alcohol, *(c)* staff and *(d)* accommodation. [204348]

Mr. Lammy: Expenditure on entertainment for the Department, which covers costs for the Court Service, the Public Guardianship Office and DCA headquarters are set out in the following table:

Period	*Total DCA*
2004–05 (to 30 November)	45,798
2003–04	79,050
2002–03	43,378
2001–02	44,730
2000–01	60,768
1999–2000	71,166
1998–99	45,087

However, it is not possible to list the entertainment costs spent by the Department broken down by *(a)* food, *(b)* alcohol, *(c)* staff and *(d)* accommodation without incurring disproportionate cost.

Information on previous years is not readily available.

Invoice Payments

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the average length of time was between the date of invoices issued to his Department from a supplier and payment by the Department of the invoice in the last 12 months for which figures are available; what percentage of these invoices were paid within 30 days of the date of issue of the invoice; what percentage of these invoices remained unpaid after 90 days; and if he will make a statement on the Department's policy on the payment of invoices issued to it. [200614]

Mr. Lammy: During the period 1 April 2003 to 31 March 2004 the Department paid supplier invoices, on average, within 15 days (unaudited figures). During this period, the Department paid 91.5 per cent. of undisputed invoices within 30 days or the agreed credit terms and 0.84 per cent. (unaudited figure) of invoices remained unpaid after 90 days.

The Government are committed to improving the payment culture in the UK in order to create a fair and stable environment for business transactions. Government Departments and their agencies should aim to pay all invoices not in dispute within 30 days or within the agreed contractual terms if otherwise specified. The Department supports this policy.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many complaints were made by departmental civil servants regarding the conduct of special advisers between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004. [203471]

Mr. Leslie: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my right hon. Friend the Minister of State for the Cabinet Office on 13 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 946W.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many special advisers there are in the Department, broken down by Civil Service pay-grade. [206511]

Mr. Leslie: Details on the names and number of Special Advisers by pay band by Department are published on an annual basis. For information for the financial year 2003–04, I refer the hon. Member to the statement given by my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister, on Thursday, 22 July 2004, *Official Report*, column 466W.

Information for 2004–05 will be published as soon as it is ready after the end of the current financial year.

Voter Registration

Dr. Pugh: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what assessment the Government has made of *(a)* proposals for individual voter registration and *(b)* the possible effects of such a system on the number of young people likely to vote. [207295]

Mr. Leslie: Mr Christopher Leslie: The Government is sympathetic to the principles of individual registration and appreciates the benefits it might bring, particularly with regard to supporting remote voting. However, there are concerns about the possible impact of individual registration on registration rates and by extension the ability of eligible electors to vote. As such we are therefore considering the options to support remote voting with an approach that preserves the completeness and integrity of electoral registers.

The Government has made no assessment of the effects of such a system on the number of young people likely to vote, but research undertaken by the Electoral Commission following the introduction of individual registration in Northern Ireland (The Electoral Fraud (Northern Ireland) Act 2002: An Assessment of its first year of operation) has suggested that young people are among the most under registered, with 29 per cent. of 18–24 year olds not on the register. The Government is reluctant to see a fall in the registration rates of young people, already an under registered group, and any future work on registration will take this into account.

Voter Turnout

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what steps the Department has taken to encourage more people to participate in the next General Election. [206969]

Mr. Leslie: No date has yet been fixed for the next general election. The Government has introduced various measures aimed at making voting easier and more convenient, including postal voting on demand which has proved very popular among voters. The independent Electoral Commission has responsibility for encouraging public involvement in the democratic process. It plans to conduct a public awareness campaign to promote voter registration and participation in the forthcoming elections. This includes the local elections scheduled to take place across England and Northern Ireland and, when it is called, any general election.

TREASURY

Aggregates Levy

Annabelle Ewing: To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what estimate he has made of the cost to industry in Scotland of the Aggregates Levy since its introduction; [207578]

(2) what estimate he has made of the impact on local authorities in Scotland of the Aggregates Levy since its introduction; [207579]

(3) what change there has been in imports of aggregates into the UK since the introduction of the Aggregates Levy. [207580]

John Healey: The Aggregates Levy was introduced in the UK in April 2002 and an assessment of the impact of its introduction is currently being conducted by HM Customs and Excise. No assessment has been made of the cost of the aggregates levy to industry or local authorities in Scotland.

Imports of aggregate make up less than 1 per cent. of total UK aggregate production levels. Between 2001–02 and 2003–04 (the years either side of the introduction of the aggregates levy in April 2002) aggregate imported into the UK increased by 622,425 tonnes compared with a total of UK aggregate production of around 200 million tonnes in 2003.

Childcare Vouchers

Claire Ward: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many families have received *(a)* childcare vouchers and *(b)* child tax credits in the (i) Watford and (ii) South West Hertfordshire constituencies. [207584]

Dawn Primarolo: The information at *(a)* is not available.

The numbers of in-work families in each country, region, local authority and constituency receiving child and working tax credits are shown in various issues of "Child and Working Tax Credits Statistics. Geographical analyses." These appear on the Inland Revenue web site at www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/Dersonal-tax-credits/cwtc-qeoq-stats.htm

Claims to Tax

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the answer of 16 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1234W, on Inland Revenue and Customs, what criteria *(a)* Inland Revenue and *(b)* HM Customs and Excise use in decisions on reducing or eliminating claims to tax; at what level these decisions have to be sanctioned; and what the total sum involved in such decisions was for each organisation in the last tax year. [206988]

Dawn Primarolo: For both the Inland Revenue and HM Customs and Excise claims for tax or duty are rejected or reduced in accordance with the appropriate legislation. In all cases the claimant is advised of the reason for the rejection or reduction. The work is managed by officers in executive grades. The total sums involved are not held centrally and therefore cannot be provided without incurring a disproportionate cost.

Crown Estate Property

Mr. Alan Williams: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer which Crown Estate property has been leased to Prince Edward; how long the lease is; and how many *(a)* bedrooms and *(b)* living rooms there are in the property. [207144]

Mr. Timms: The Crown Estate has a 50-year lease agreement with the Earl of Wessex for Bagshot Park in Windsor.

As a matter of principle the Crown Estate does not disclose details of the composition of any private residencies on which it has granted leases, as this is considered to be a confidential matter between the Crown Estate and the lessee.

Customs and Excise

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many Customs and Excise staff were employed in Scotland in each year since 1997. [207581]

Dawn Primarolo: The numbers of staff employed in Scotland in civil service departments and agencies since 1997, including HM Customs and Excise, are available on the Cabinet Office's "civil service statistics" website at http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management_information/statistical_information/statistics/index.asp and in the annual editions of 'Civil Service Statistics'.

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when the last review of staffing *(a)* numbers and *(b)* locations was carried out by HM Customs and Excise. [207582]

Dawn Primarolo: The national deployment of Customs and Excise staff is reviewed annually, and at other times as necessary. The number of staff deployed is determined by current risk and intelligence factors.

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the likely impact of the Commissioners for Revenue and Customs Bill on the number of Customs and Excise staff employed in Scotland. [207583]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 20 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1401W.

Departmental Properties

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many properties are held by the Department; what total floor space these properties provide; how many properties are vacant; and how much floor space vacant properties comprise. [206483]

Mr. Boateng: The Treasury occupies 1 Horse Guards Road, which has a net internal area of 31,200 square metres. No other properties are held or occupied.

Employment Rates

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many adults of working age were economically inactive in the latest period for which figures are available; and how many of these were in each of the 10 largest cities in terms of population. [206390]

Mr. Boateng: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Mr. David Willetts, dated 10 January 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question about economic inactivity. I am replying in his absence.

The table overleaf gives estimates for the working age people who are economically inactive (i.e. neither in employment nor unemployed) and resident in each of the 10 largest cities in the UK for the three month period ending in August 2004. The data are the numbers of economically inactive people resident in each City Unitary Authority area, except for London where the data are for the sum of the London Boroughs. The cities are listed in the order of size of population in the Unitary Authority areas.

These estimates from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) are, as with any sample survey, subject to sampling variability.

Working age economic inactivity[1] in the largest cities[2] in the UK Three months ending in August 2004

Not seasonally adjusted

	Number (thousand)
Total United Kingdom	7,729
City unitary authority area	
London[3]	1,186
Birmingham	165
Leeds	87
Glasgow	97
Sheffield	78
Bradford	72
Edinburgh	56
Liverpool	95
Manchester	77
Bristol	54

[1] This refers to working age people (male 16 to 64, female 16 to 59) who are neither in employment nor unemployed.

[2] Each of the 10 largest cities in the United Kingdom are sorted in descending order of population size.

[3] Sum of London boroughs.

Source:

ONS Labour Force Survey

Mr. Willetts: To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer the Chancellor of the Exchequer,(1) what the rates of *(a)* economic activity and *(b)* employment amongst men aged (i) under 25 years, (ii) 25 to 34 years, (iii) 35 to 44 years, (iv) 45 to 54 years, (v) 55 to 64 years, (vi) 65 to 74 years and (vii) 75 years or over were on the latest date for which figures are available; [206419]

(2) what *(a)* economic activity rate and *(b)* employment rate amongst women aged (i) under 25 years, (ii) 25 to 34 years, (iii) 35 to 44 years, (iv) 45 to 54 years, (v) 55 to 60 years, (vi) 61 to 64 years, (vii) 65 to 74 years and (viii) 75 years or over was on the latest date for which figures are available. [206422]

Mr. Boateng: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Mr. Colin Mawl to Mr. David Willetts, dated 10 January 2004:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Questions about employment and economic activity. I am replying in his absence.

The table overleaf gives numbers and rates of employment and economic activity by age and by gender in the United Kingdom for the three-month period ending in August 2004.

These estimates from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) are, as with any sample survey, subject to sampling variability.

Economic Activity Three months ending in August 2004 United Kingdom not seasonally adjusted

All persons	*Employment (thousand)*	*Employment rate[2] (percentage)*	*Economic Activity (thousand)*	*Economic Activity[3] rate (percentage)*
Under 25[1]	4,140	62.0	4,795	71.8
25–34	6,141	79.7	6,419	83.3
35–44	7,364	81.8	7,587	84.2
45–54	6,124	80.7	6,297	83.0
55–64	3,850	56.1	3,953	57.6
65–74	474	9.5	483	9.7
75 +	66	1.6	66	1.6

Men	*Employment (thousand)*	*Employment rate (percentage)*	*Economic Activity (thousand)*	*Economic Activity rate (percentage)*
Under 25[1]	2,147	64.1	2,523	75.4
25–34	3,286	87.6	3,446	91.8
35–44	3,942	89.2	4,062	91.9
45–54	3,224	86.0	3,326	88.7
55–64	2,220	65.8	2,294	68.0
65–74	301	12.8	307	13.1
75 +	42	2.6	42	2.6

Women	*Employment (thousand)*	*Employment rate[2] (percentage)*	*Economic Activity (thousand)*	*Economic Activity rate[3] (percentage)*
Under 25[1]	1,993	59.8	2,272	68.1
25–34	2,855	72.2	2,972	75.1
35–44	3,422	74.6	3,525	76.8
45–54	2,900	75.5	2,971	77.3
55–64	1,630	46.7	1,659	47.5
65–74	173	6.6	175	6.7
75 +	24	1.0	24	1.0

[1] This refers to people aged 16 to 24.

[2] The rates refer to people in employment as percentage of the population in the relevant gender and age group.

[3] The rates refer to people who are economically active (either in employment or unemployed) as a percentage of the total population in the relevant gender and age group.

Source:

ONS Labour Force Survey

European Union

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the UK financial contribution to the European Union is calculated on the VAT *(a)* due to and *(b)* actually received by Customs and Excise. [207316]

Dawn Primarolo: The European Union budget is financed by four resources, as explained in the Government's annual White Paper on European Community Finances (Cm 6134): customs duties, including those on agricultural products, sugar levies, a VAT-based resource, and a GNI-based resource . The VAT-based resource currently makes up about 14 per cent. of total EC Budget revenue. It is calculated on the basis of a notional harmonised rate and reflects finally taxed expenditure across the EU.

The method for calculating the VAT-based resource is set out in the Own Resources Decision:

the starting point is the total amount of net VAT collected in each member state;

a weighted average of the rates at which VAT is charged in the member state is then applied to the net total to produce the member state's intermediate national base;

the intermediate base is then adjusted for derogations operated under the Sixth VAT Directive to produce the harmonised base;

a notional rate of 1 per cent. is then applied to this base. The base is then capped at 50 per cent. of 1 per cent. of the member state's GNI; and

a call-up rate (currently a maximum of 0.5 per cent.) is applied to produce a member state's VAT-based contribution.

Food Imports

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what quantities of UK produced foods have been transported to *(a)* EU member states and *(b)* other countries and then imported back into the UK since 2002. [205251]

Alun Michael: I have been asked to reply.

It is not possible to determine whether exported foods are produced in the UK or imported, processed and then exported. Additionally HM Customs and Excise only record country of dispatch rather then county of origin.

Inland Revenue/Customs and Excise (Merger)

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list the documents his Department has published since 1997 relating to the potential *(a)* cost and *(b)* efficiency savings resulting from a merger of the Inland Revenue and HM Customs and Excise. [207287]

Dawn Primarolo: Documents published by the Chancellor's departments since 1997 relating to the potential cost and efficiency savings resulting from a merger of the Inland Revenue and HM Customs and Excise are:

Financing Britain's Future, Review of Revenue Departments by Gus O'Donnell (March 2004, ISBN 0-010-161632-5)

Regulatory Impact Assessment: the Commissioners for Revenue and Customs Bill (November 2004)

Copies are available in the House Library.

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans he has to carry out further assessments of the potential *(a)* cost and *(b)* efficiency savings resulting from a merger of the Inland Revenue and HM Customs and Excise. [207288]

Dawn Primarolo: As the necessary changes are developed, the management designate of HMRC is committed to assessing costs and benefits. Work on this has already commenced and has to date produced the current known costs of integration of £75 million as stated in the Regulatory Impact Assessment for the Commissioners for Revenue and Customs Bill, and the expected staff savings from integration were identified in the efficiency technical notes published by the departments.

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how many *(a)* gross job losses, *(b)* net job losses and *(c)* job relocations from (i) the Inland Revenue and (ii) HM Customs and Excise would result from implementing (A) the Gershon Review, (B) the Lyons Review and (C) the merger of the Inland Revenue and HM Customs and Excise; [207289]

(2) what efficiency savings from *(a)* the Inland Revenue and *(b)* HM Customs and Excise would result from implementing (i) the Gershon Review, (ii) the Lyons Review and (iii) the merger of the Inland Revenue and HM Customs and Excise. [207290]

Dawn Primarolo: The efficiency and relocation recommendations of the Gershon and Lyons reviews apply to the integrated Revenue and Customs department announced in the 2004 Budget.

I refer the hon. Member to the Efficiency Technical Note published by HM Revenue and Customs, http://www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/psa/hmrc_etn.pdf.

Irradiated Foods

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what quantities of irradiated foods, other than herbs and spices, have been imported from *(a)* EU member states and *(b)* other countries for general sale since 2002. [205249]

Alun Michael: I have been asked to reply

HM Customs and Excise do not distinguish between irradiated and non-irradiated foods.

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what quantities of UK produced food have been transported to *(a)* EU member states and *(b)* other countries for irradiation treatment and then imported back into the UK since 2002. [205250]

Alun Michael: I have been asked to reply.

As HM Customs and Excise do not distinguish between irradiated and non-irradiated foods, it is not possible to determine whether exported foods are produced in the UK or imported, processed and then exported.

Lyons Review

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what steps he is taking to ensure compliance by Government Departments with the proposals in the Lyons Review for relocation of public sector jobs, with particular reference to jobs in the oil and gas sectors. [207633]

Mr. Boateng: The Lyons Review proposals are being taken forward as part of the Government's Efficiency Programme under the leadership of John Oughton. There are no proposals in the Lyons Review that specifically relate to the oil and gas sectors.

Mariners (National Insurance)

Mr. Alan Reid: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer under what circumstances employer's national insurance contributions are liable to be paid in respect of the earnings of mariners who are employed on UK-flagged vessels operated by offshore manning companies. [207689]

Dawn Primarolo: Employer's National Insurance Contributions are payable if the mariners are employed in inshore waters classified as A, B, C or D under the Merchant Shipping (Categorisation of Waters) Regulations 1992.

Paris Club

Harry Cohen: To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations the UK Government are making to non-Paris Club countries to *(a)* match and *(b)* exceed Paris Club commitments in terms of debt write-off; and if he will make a statement. [207267]

Mr. Boateng: The 21 November Paris Club agreement with Iraq contains a provision that requires Iraq to seek comparable treatment from all non-Paris Club creditors, including private creditors. The UK Government expects and encourages all creditors of Iraq to agree terms no less generous to Iraq than those delivered by the Paris Club.

Public Expenditure Survey

Mr. Keith Simpson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will place in the Library copies of all current public expenditure survey papers. [206700]

Mr. Boateng *[holding answer 21 December 2004]*: All current extant public expenditure survey (PES) papers will be placed the Library of the House.

Royal Lodge, Windsor

Mr. Alan Williams: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many *(a)* bedrooms and *(b)* living rooms there are within the Royal Lodge, Windsor. [207143]

Mr. Timms: As a matter of principle, the Crown Estate does not disclose details of the composition of any private residencies on which it has granted leases, as this is considered to be a confidential matter between the Crown Estate and the lessee.

Sick Leave

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many days sick leave were taken by civil servants in the Department in each year since 1997; and what the sickness absence rate was in each year. [204520]

Mr. Timms: The information is as follows.

(a) The number of sickness absence days taken by employees of Customs and Excise since 1997, and the sickness absence rate are:

	Number of sickness absence days taken	*Average working days sickness absence per staff*
1997	211,740	8.9
1998	222,564	9.4
1999	225,235	9.6
2000	206,442	9.0
2001	203,606	8.7
2002	207,297	9.0
2003	215,252	9.2

(b) The number of sickness absence days taken by employees of the Inland Revenue since 1997 are:

	Number of sickness absence days taken	*Average working days sickness absence per staff*
1997	811,723	11.9
1998	550,957	11.0
1999	751,893	11.5
2000	690,003	10.9
2001	620,987	9.5
2002	689,126	10.5
2003	762,350	10.8

(c) The number of sickness absence days taken by employees of the Treasury since 1997 are:

	Number of sickness absence days taken	*Average working days sickness absence per staff*
1997	4,714	4.9
1998	3,783	3.9
1999	5,258	5.5
2000	3,826	3.9
2001	4,738	4.7
2002	5,196	4.4
2003	5,892	5.2

The published information on average working days sickness absence covering the years 1997 to 2003 is derived from the Annual Report "Analysis of Sickness Absence in the Civil Service" published by AON Limited, and formerly by Bioss and BMI Health Services. Actual number of days taken due to sickness absence is calculated by multiplying the average number of sickness absence days by number of staff years. Sickness absence targets for the department are reported on in the relevant departmental and annual reports.

HM Customs and Excise and the Inland Revenue are in the midst of significant organisational change and currently working on formulating managing attendance policies and procedures for the new department, HM Revenue and Customs. It is anticipated that this will have a positive impact upon the current statistics.

Stolen Property

Mr. Osborne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many civil servants from his Department have *(a)* faced disciplinary proceedings as a result of allegations of theft, *(b)* been charged with theft and *(c)* been dismissed following theft allegations in each year since 1997. [206400]

Mr. Boateng: There have been no cases of civil servants in HM Treasury who have *(a)* faced disciplinary proceedings as a result of allegations of theft[1] *(b)* been charged with theft and *(c)* been dismissed following internal theft allegations in each year since 1997.

However, in 1997 one member of staff was charged and convicted of theft external to the Department. The individual was subsequently dismissed from Treasury employment following internal disciplinary procedure.

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[1] Records of unproven allegations are not retained.

Tax Credits

Miss Begg: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how many end of year tax credit overpayments have been identified by the Inland Revenue; [206251]

(2) how many requests not to recover tax overpayments the Inland Revenue has received in the last period for which figures are available; and how many requests have been processed; [206255]

(3) in how many cases the Inland Revenue has decided not to recover a tax credit overpayment in the last period for which figures are available; [206257]

(4) how many appeals have been lodged with the Inland Revenue with regard to tax credit *(a)* overpayments and *(b)* underpayments; and how many have been settled. [207304]

Dawn Primarolo: For the number of tax credit overpayments, I refer my hon. Friend to my reply to the hon. Members for Northavon (Mr. Webb) and for Yeovil (Mr. Laws) on 15 November 2004, *Official Report*, columns 946–48W.

By the end of December 2004 about 78,000 taxpayers had returned Form TC846, or had otherwise been recorded as requesting the write-off of their overpayments on grounds of official error. About 41,000 requests had been decided by that date, and about 1,600 families had their overpayments written off for that reason.

To date the Inland Revenue has had to consider very few requests for overpayments to be written off on ground of inability to pay.

In addition, for the number of families whose overpayments arising from a software error are to be written off, I refer her to paragraph 2.10 of the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General attached to the Inland Revenue Report and Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2004.

Tax credit claimants can appeal against decisions which affect the value of their entitlement. Whether there is an overpayment or underpayment is irrelevant to the consideration of the appeal, and so records are not held of the number of appellants who had an overpayment or underpayment.

Tax Credits (Dagenham)

Jon Cruddas: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people in each ward of the Dagenham constituency claim *(a)* pension credit and *(b)* working tax credit. [207156]

Dawn Primarolo: I understand from the Department for Work and Pensions that the numbers of recipients of pension credit at 31 October 2004 were as follows:

Ward (Dagenham)	*Households in receipt of pension credit*
Alibon	530
Chadwell Heath	540
Eastbrook	455
Heath	575
Parsloes	530
River	435
Valence	645
Village	465
Whalebone	340

Notes:

1. All wards based on Census Wards current at April 2003. Census wards do not always nest precisely inside parliamentary constituencies. The wards of Parsloes and River cross over into Barking parliamentary constituency. Figures are for whole wards.
2. Benefit counts at ward level are rounded to a multiple of 5 to protect the confidentiality of individual claimants.

Source:

IAD Information Centre, Department for Work and Pensions.

Estimates of the number of in-work families in each constituency receiving tax credits are published in "Child and Working Tax Credit Statistics. Geographical analyses. December 2004". This can be found on the Inland Revenue website, at www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/stats/personal-tax-credits/menu.htm.

Estimates for April 2005 will be published in April or May 2005.

Estimates for smaller areas are not currently available.

Unified Business Rate

Dr. Pugh: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans the Treasury has to vary the unified business rate for small shops. [207530]

Dawn Primarolo: From 1 April 2005, all qualifying small businesses will be eligible for the small business rate relief. It is estimated that around 450,000 English small businesses, including many small shops, will benefit from the introduction of this relief. Beyond this, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has no plans to vary the unified business rate for small shops.

United States (British Visitors)

Mr. Lilley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the number of British citizens who have visited the USA *(a)* in the last 30 years, *(b)* in the last five years and *(c)* in the last year; and what estimate he has made of the proportion who obtained a visa for the visit. [206534]

Mr. Timms *[holding answer 21 December 2004]*: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell to Mr. Peter Lilley, dated 10 January 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to answer your recent question asking Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the number of British citizens who have visited the USA *(a)* in the last 30 years, *(b)* in the last five years and *(c)* the last year; and what estimate he has made of the proportion who obtained a visa for the visit. I am replying in his absence.

From the International Passenger Survey we can measure the number of visits to the USA made by UK residents in each of the periods requested.

(a) 57,271,000

(b) 19,594,000

(c) 3,613,000

(figures provided to nearest thousand)

It should be noted that these represent the number of visits made by UK residents to the USA in each of the periods requested. As some people may make more than one visit, these figures are higher than the number of people who visited the USA. In addition, these are the number of visits to USA made by UK residents and that all UK residents are not necessarily British Citizens.

The International Passenger Survey does not collect information on whether a visa was granted for these visits or not. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office have attempted to obtain this information from the American Embassy but at the time of writing this data is not available. If the information does become available at a later stage, it should be noted that it will not be directly comparable with the figures derived from the IPS as one visa could be used for more than one trip and the number of visits each visa is used for is unknown.

Unleaded Petrol

Annabelle Ewing: To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer what the total tax payable on the average pump price of a litre of unleaded petrol was on 20 December 2004. [207601]

John Healey: The following table gives the total tax payable for the average pump price of a litre of ultra low sulphur unleaded petrol on Monday 20 December 2004.

	Pence per litre
Average pump price	81.46
Amount of duty	47.10
Amount of VAT	12.13
Total Tax Payable	59.23

Waste Services

Sue Doughty: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will specify *(a)* the basis and *(b)* the evidence on which the 2004 comprehensive spending review's efficiency target of £300 million relating to waste service was set. [206772]

Mr. Morley: I have been asked to reply.

Departmental proposals for, and the overall level of, efficiencies in environmental services were informed by consultation with Sir Peter Gershon's Efficiency Review team, the Local Government Association and other key organisations involved in this area. Detailed analysis was based on Defra's development of a new quantitative model, designed to support a robust, carefully modelled case for on-going government expenditure on waste as part of the 2004 Spending Review.

The model's primary purpose is to predict local authorities' waste management costs, flows of materials and the range of new facilities needed for waste treatment to meet the EU Landfill Directive targets and deliver increased rates of recycling and recovery. Analysis of the scope for greater efficiency in waste services identified the potential for delivering gains through: greater joint working between local authorities; encouragement and communication of best procurement practice; stimulating industry to ensure timely delivery of a wider, better designed range of facilities; improved operation of the land-use planning system; increased markets for recyclates and compost; and, shifting local authority planning from the short-term to the long-term in order to minimise overall costs.

Defra's Waste Implementation Programme already supports a range of activities to help local authorities drive up and re-orientate their waste management performance. Most will help deliver the improvements sought in the Efficiency Review, such as the targeted support being provided to improve procurement, and to stimulate industry to offer a wider, better designed range of facilities.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Arms Sales

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the amount of Indonesia's indebtedness to the UK is; and what proportion is attributable to the sale of military equipment. [206157]

Mr. Alexander *[holding answer 21 December 2004]:* As at the end of November 2004, the Export Credits Guarantee Department had claims to the value of £749 million outstanding in relation to Indonesia. Of this, £551 million related to defence contracts.

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much agent's commission the Export Credits Guarantee Department covered on the sale of Hawk jets to Indonesia; and what percentage of the contract the commission represented. [206130]

Mr. Alexander: Details of contractual arrangements (including agent's commission) are provided to ECGD by exporters in confidence.

Business (Impact of Legislation)

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry which of the reviews carried out since 2001 on the working and impact of major pieces of legislation affecting business have been conducted by her Department; what changes to legislation were proposed as a result of each review; and if she will place copies of the reviews in the Library. [202139]

Ms Hewitt: The major pieces of legislation reviewed by the Department of Trade and Industry since 2001 are:

Consumer Credit Act 1974

Renewables Obligation Order 2002 (reviewed three times for different aspects) Employment Relations Act 1999

Directors Remuneration Report Regulations (assessed for compliance and the extent of changes to remuneration practices).

Changes proposed as a result of these reviews include:

Publication of White Paper "Fair, Clear and Competitive—the Consumer Credit Market in the 21st century" following review of Consumer Credit Act 1974, and work is in progress on draft legislation to reform the licensing system and improve consumer redress;

Amendment Orders for the Renewables Obligation Order 2002;

Employment Relations Act 2004 incorporated recommendations from the review of the Employment Relations Act 1999.

The review of the Directors' Remuneration Report Regulations 2002 is ongoing.

Copies of review documents are available in the Libraries of the House and on the. DTI website for all of the above-mentioned reviews except for that of the Directors Remuneration Report Regulations which is still on-going, and expected to be published in January 2005.

Business Support Initiatives

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much has been allocated to support *(a)* business start-ups and *(b)* SME growth in each enterprise area by region in the 2004–05 financial year. [200527]

Nigel Griffiths: Business start-ups and SME growth is not measured by Enterprise Area. This information can only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Conferences

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many conferences were *(a)* attended by officials from her Department, *(b)* cancelled by and *(c)* facilitated by her Department in each year since 1997; and what the (i) cost to the Department and (ii) location was in each case. [205767]

Ms Hewitt: The Department does not maintain a central register of conferences organised by its various business units nor a register of conferences attended by individual officials and is therefore unable to provide the information requested.

Creche Facilities

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what crèche facilities are provided by her Department; and at what cost. [202380]

Jacqui Smith: My Department is fully committed to providing an employment package which supports working parents and carers. DTI's provision is set within the wider context of an ambitious programme to support flexible working at all grades. DTI consults its staff and unions regularly on these issues. In a specific childcare survey DTI parents indicated that flexible working is the provision they value most highly. DTI's clear support for working parents has enabled us, over the last decade, to retain many talented parents who might otherwise have left the workplace.

DTI staff in Central London have access to a thirty-two place holiday play-scheme in our 1 Victoria Street building which is highly rated by both parents and children for its quality. DTI HQ staff in Cardiff have access to a local holiday play-scheme.

London-based DTI staff also have access to six full-time subsidized nursery places for under 5s, currently occupied by five children. DTI is actively working with the Interdepartmental Group on Childcare to establish a more strategic and joined up approach to childcare for all civil servants, especially in London. DTI's annual budget for childcare is £65,000.

Departmental Credit Cards

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many credit cards for official expenditure are held by her Department. [206446]

Ms Hewitt: According to centrally held figures we have approximately 400 Government procurement cards in circulation. This figure fluctuates considerably due to changes in personnel and working procedures within Departments

Departmental Electrical Equipment

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many items of electrical equipment were used by her Department in the last year for which figures are available, broken down by *(a)* cost and *(b)* number of each type of item. [205724]

Ms Hewitt: The Department uses a wide variety of electrical equipment from major items of electrical plant in our buildings such as lifts, air conditioning systems, sewerage systems all of which will comprise many separate items of electrical equipment right down to small items of equipment on individual desks such as a desk lamp. The most common item of electrical equipment used is the standard desktop computer of which there are approximately 5,200 on the Departmental estate. The numbers and cost of individual items cannot be separately identified as they are an integral part of the main departmental physical and ICT infrastructure and managed accordingly.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much has been spent by her Department in each year since 1997 on taskforces and similar bodies. [204711]

Jacqui Smith: Only the costs of the Small Business Investment Taskforce for 2000–01, 2001–02 and 2003–04 are separately identifiable. These were:

	£000
2000–01	17
2001–02	39
2003–04	60

The Small Business Investment Taskforce's costs for 2002–03 and those of DTI's other Taskforces and similar bodies are not identified separately within DTI's Accounts and can be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much the Department spent on lawyers in each year since 1997; how many *(a)* actions, *(b)* settlements and *(c)* court cases there were in each year and what the costs of each settlement were. [206463]

Ms Hewitt: This information is not available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the cost of travel within the UK for the Department was in each year since 1997; and how much of this was spent on *(a)* hire cars, *(b)* helicopter hire, *(c)* hotel accommodation and *(d)* subsistence. [206479]

Ms Hewitt: The cost of DTI travel within the UK in each year since 1998 was:

	£ *Cost of travel*
1998–99	6,026,861
1999–2000	6,735,828
2000–01	7,032,027
2001–02	7,602,641
2002–03	6,883,983
2003–04	10,996,512

DTI UK travel costs for 1997–98 are not stored electronically and it would entail disproportionate cost to gather that data.

The cost of DTI UK hotel accommodation within the UK in each year since 1997 was:

	£ *Cost of hotel accommodation*
1997–98	760,867
1998–99	801,623
1999–2000	745,315
2000–01	928,188
2001–02	1,009,618
2002–03	1,188,627
2003–04	1,090,040

To provide information about how much of this was spent on *(a)* hire cars, *(b)* helicopter hire, *(c)* hotel accommodation and *(d)* subsistence would entail disproportionate cost.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much the Department spent on first-class travel in each year since 1997. [206564]

Ms Hewitt: Since the year 2000 the DTI spend on first class travel has been:

	£
2000	1,976,186
2001	2,068,054
2002	2,325,339
2003	2,128,531
2004	1,525,584

Figures prior to 2000 are not available.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many overseas trips, and at what total cost, have been made by her Department in each year since 1997; and what the costs of *(a)* flights, *(b)* internal travel, *(c)* hotel accommodation and *(d)* subsistence were for each trip. [206647]

Ms Hewitt: Since 1 January 2000, the number of overseas trips made by DTI was:

	Number
2000	13,139
2001	13,301
2002	12,855
2003	12,560
2004	9,307

Since 1998, the total costs of overseas trips made by DTI was:

	£
1998–99	5,019,971
1999–2000	5,291,063
2000–01	5,470,024
2001–02	4,912,785
2002–03	5,583,825
2003–04	4,260,257

DTI UK travel costs for 1997–98 are not stored electronically and it would entail disproportionate cost to provide that data.

To provide information about how much was spent on *(a)* flights, *(b)* internal travel, *(c)* hotel accommodation and *(d)* subsistence for each trip would entail disproportionate cost.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much has been spent by her Department on *(a)* new furniture and *(b)* hired furniture in each year since 1997. [205604]

Jacqui Smith: My Department has been undertaking a major space management programme since 2001. This has required the following investment in new furniture to introduce flexible workspace and significant space dividends across the London HQ estate, which will result in releasing a number of its buildings. Information prior to 2001 is not available. DTI has not hired any furniture since 1987.

Financial year	*£ million (ex. VAT)*
2001–02	1.845
2002–03	3.629
2003–04	1.664
2004–05	0.714

Departmental IT Projects

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will list her Department's IT projects in each year since 1997, broken down by *(a)* amount spent, *(b)* purpose, *(c)* cost of over-run and *(d)* time of over-run. [205779]

Ms Hewitt: My Department has had a PFI contract for the provision of IT services since 1999, where IT project costs are borne by the supplier. IT systems also form part of other outsourced business services. Under these contracts my Department pays service charges that include IT systems development and support costs.

Since 1997 my Department has introduced many IT systems and services some of which are identified as follows:

	IT system	*Service*
1997–98	DRMS	Database of Departmental files
1998	RAB	Departmental Accounting System
1999	Elgar	IT Desktop, network infrastructure and support services
2001–03	Matrix	Departmental Electronic Records System
2002–03	Calipsoe	Departmental HR system
2002–03	Mentor	Departmental Accounting Services (including IT Services)
2004	Capri	Ministers Correspondence Tracking System
2004	JI/CMS	Web hosting and content management services

Before the award of the PFI contract in 1999, central records of IT expenditure included only central corporate infrastructure. These records show that total IT spend in millions was:

	£ million *Amount*
1998–99	
1999–2000	12.1
2000–01	15.0
2001–02	30.0
2002–03	32.0
2003–04	41.0
	41.9

Further detail is not available without incurring disproportionate cost.

Departmental Lighting

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much has been spent by her Department on lighting in each year since 1997. [205745]

Ms Hewitt: The Department does not keep separate records on how much it spends on lighting. Items such as replacement tubes and bulbs and disposal costs are embedded within the charges for our maintenance contract. Energy for lighting is not separately metered.

Total electricity costs on the DTI HQ estate over the period is as follows of which about one third currently comes from renewable sources.

	£
2003–04	
2002–03	836,782
2001–02	758,152
2000–01	855,086
1999–2000	928,845
1998–99	1,035,770
1997–98	916,590
	1,064,612

Departmental Pay Gap

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the gender pay gap amongst staff in her Department. [202382]

Jacqui Smith: My Department completed an equal pay review in 2003 and put in place an action plan to address any concerns.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State made a written ministerial statement to the House on 10 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 102 WS, to advise that Action Plans for the DTI and its Agencies had been published and posted on the DTI Website. http://www.dti.gov.uk/about_dti_documents.html

Copies of the Action Plans have been placed in the Libraries of the House.

Departmental Plants

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much her Department spent on *(a)* indoor bought plants, *(b)* indoor hired plants, *(c)* outdoor bought plants and *(d)* outdoor hired plants in each year since 1997. [205622]

Ms Hewitt: The Department does not record details of the costs of plants and we are therefore unable to provide a break down of the costs as required. The Department currently has a mixture of rented and bought plants, indoor and outdoor planting.

Our records for total plant costs only date back to 2001 and the breakdown of the spend is as follows:

	£ *Amount*
2001–02	
2002–03	34,659.60
2003–04	30,422.16
2004–05	31,048.97
	25,165.06

Departmental Refurbishment

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the cost of refurbishments in her Department was in each year since 1997; and what the planned expenditure is for 2005–06. [205664]

Ms Hewitt: My Department undertakes a wide variety of projects as part of on-going maintenance and improvements of its existing buildings. The cost of significant works to the building services and fabric since 1997 are shown by complete financial years as follows:

	£ million *Amount*
1997–98	
1998–99	2
1999–2000	.2
2000–01	2.15
2001–02	1.4
2002–03	4.32
2003–04	1.23
2004–05	2.3
	7.73

The costs in 2004–05 relate to a major programme of investment in rationalising our London estate which will result in the vacation of three buildings currently costing £8 million per annum. Plans for works during 2005–06 are still being developed and firm estimates are not yet available.

Departmental Telephone Numbers

Mr. Tyler: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many non-geographic 0870 telephone numbers are in use by her Department; and what services can be accessed by calling each of them. [205839]

Ms Hewitt: The call centres of two services provided by contractors on behalf of my department use 0870 numbers:

The Sixth EU Framework Programme UK Information Point (FP6UK) provides one number for general enquiries on the rules for participation in the programme (plus fax and Minicom numbers) and six numbers for more technical advice on specific themes. This supplements a web-based service.

The Publications Orderline uses three numbers (general orderline, fax and Minicom) for those customers who do not wish to use the online ordering service for DTI publications.

My Department is currently reviewing the provision of its helplines and, following the issue of Central Office of Information Better Practice Guidance for Government contact centres in September 2004, the use of 0870 numbers.

Mr. Tyler: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much revenue her Department has received from the use of non-geographic 0870 telephone numbers for the period 1 October 2003 to 30 September 2004. [205849]

Ms Hewitt: None.

Disabled Staff

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many of the staff employed by her Department have a declared disability. [205556]

Jacqui Smith: The Department collects disability data on a voluntary basis. The information tabulated as follows is extracted from our personnel records database and gives the current position in DTI Headquarters (including Small Business Service) at 1 December 2004:

	Number
Number of staff employed	3,962
Number of staff employed with a declared disability	251

Documents

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what her Department's policy is in relation to the storage of documents and the use of shredders; and whether this policy has been reviewed in the past 12 months. [206747]

Jacqui Smith: My Department's policy on the storage of documents is that electronic documents should be stored in the Department's electronic records management system (ERMS) if they relate to the work of DTI and contain valuable information about, or evidence of, the activities of DTI. Paper documents that need to be retained and cannot be scanned should be stored on official departmental files.

Documents in the ERMS and in official files will be deleted in accordance with existing departmental retention policies, which vary depending on the category of record. Some will be retained permanently in the national archives.

Documents that are not stored in the ERMS or on official files should be deleted as soon as they have ceased to be of use.

The Department's policy on the use of shredders follows central guidance issued by the Cabinet Office.

These policies have not been reviewed in the past 12 months.

Electromagnetic Fields

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what action is taken to protect biological systems exposed to electromagnetic fields at public supply system frequencies. [206896]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: On the advice of the National Radiological Protection Board, the Government have adopted the guidelines of the International Commission for Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection on public exposure to electromagnetic fields. Exposure to electromagnetic fields at public supply frequencies ought to be within the basic restrictions given in the guidelines.

E-mails

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what her Department's policy is in relation to the storage and deletion of e-mails; and whether this policy has been reviewed in the past 12 months. [206746]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The Department's policy on the storage of e-mails has been reviewed and revised this year in accordance with guidance issued by the Cabinet Office. The policy is that e-mails should be stored in the Department's electronic records management system (ERMS) if they relate to the work of DTI and contain valuable information about, or evidence of, the activities of DTI.

E-mails in the ERMS will be deleted in accordance with existing departmental retention policies, which vary depending on the category of record. Some will be retained permanently in the national archives.

E-mails that are not stored in the ERMS should be deleted as soon as they have ceased to be of use.

Freedom of Information

Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many staff in her Department were employed to deal with Freedom of Information Act 2000 issues in *(a)* 2001, *(b)* 2002, *(c)* 2003 and *(d)* 2004; and how many staff are budgeted to deal with Freedom of Information Act 2000 issues in (i) 2005 and (ii) 2006. [205035]

Jacqui Smith: The staff in my Department allocated centrally to administer Freedom of Information Act issues are set out in the following table.

The table excludes centrally allocated legal advisers and secretarial support.

	Number of staff	*Pay range*
2001	1.5	½R10, ½R7, ½R3
2002	1.5	½R10, ½R7, ½R3
2003	3.5	R11, R7, ½R5, R3
2004	3.5	R11, R7, ½R5, R3
2005	3.5	R11, R9, R7, ½R5
2006	3.5	R11, R9, R7, ½R5

Staff in this table also have responsibility for administering the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information and the Data Protection and Welsh Language Acts. Beyond those staff directly involved in the on-going implementation and application of FOI within a Department, it is difficult to identify precisely the number of officials who will be dealing with Freedom of Information issues from 1 January 2005, since it is potentially part of every civil servant's role to respond to Freedom of Information requests.

Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many requests under the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information have been answered by her Department within 20 working days since 1 January 2002; what the longest time taken by her Department to answer a request under the code since 1 January 2002 has been; and what steps she is taking to prevent delays to answers under the code. [205061]

Jacqui Smith: My Department monitors correspondence, including requests, against the Whitehall Standards 15 working day target, rather than the 20 working day target of the Open Government Code. The annual correspondence figures, collected on a financial year basis, and the number which met the 15 working day target are shown as follows.

	Volume	*Number that were answered in 15 days*	*Percentage*
2001–02	82,000	78,000	95
2002–03	72,000	70,000	97
2003–04	92,000	90,000	98

The longest time taken to answer a request under the code was seven months.

From 1 January 2005, requests for information will be administered in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act which sets a general deadline for responding to requests of 20 working days. Through a comprehensive training and awareness programme, staff have been made aware of the importance of responding to requests within that deadline and the departmental records management system is under a programme of continual improvement.

Freedom of Information Act

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what safeguards private companies have that the flows of commercial-in-confidence information between them and public bodies will not be compulsorily divulged under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. [203946]

Jacqui Smith: The Freedom of Information Act provides a range of exemptions to protect information provided to public authorities. Those exemptions which are not absolute are subject to a "public interest" test. In the case of commercial-in-confidence information, relevant exemptions include the absolute exemption provided at section 41 of the Act, protecting information whose disclosure would constitute an actionable breach of confidence, and the non absolute exemption at section 43 of the Act, protecting information whose disclosure would prejudice the commercial interests of any person. These exemptions among others are likely to apply to information provided as commercial in confidence.

Fuel Poverty

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent research her Department has undertaken to ascertain the effect on households in fuel poverty of increases in fuel prices. [203977]

Mr. Mike O'Brien *[holding answer 13 December 2004]*: Our research suggests that the number of vulnerable households in fuel poverty is likely to rise by a limited amount in 2004 and 2005—perhaps by up to 200,000 vulnerable households in England over this period. This figure represents the combined effects of gas and electricity price increases countered by other measures that we have put in place on incomes and benefits. The assumptions behind this estimate are set out in two DTI publications which accompanied publication of the Fuel Poverty in England: The Government's Plan for Action on November 30. These internet publications are available to view at www.dti.gov.uk/energy/consumers/fuel_poverty/index.shtml.

Any potential increase in the numbers can be set against the very real progress that has been made: the number of households in fuel poverty in the UK has fallen by over three million since 1996, to 2.25 million in 2002 and further reductions are expected in the figure for 2003. In England, there has been a fall from the 1996 figure of 4.3 million households (three million vulnerable) to 1.4 million (1.2 million vulnerable) in 2002. The Government remains committed to achieving its target of seeking an end to the problem of fuel poverty in England in vulnerable households by 2010 as far as is reasonably practicable. .

Fuel poverty is devolved, and therefore the devolved administrations will be looking at how they each will meet their fuel poverty targets.

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what assessment she has made of the effect of the recent changes in the cost of fuel oil on the number of households in fuel poverty; [203978]

(2) what estimate she has made of the number of households which rely on oil based heating systems; and what assessment she has made of the effect on such households of recent changes in the cost of fuel oil. [203981]

Mr. Mike O'Brien *[holding answer 13 December 2004]*: As fuel poverty is devolved, therefore this answer covers England only.

My Department has considered the impacts of gas and electricity prices on fuel poverty for England. The results of this analysis were published in the Government's Fuel Poverty Action Plan, and suggests that the number of vulnerable households in fuel poverty is likely to rise by a limited amount in 2004 and 2005, perhaps by up to 200,000 vulnerable households in England over the period. We monitor the number of households in fuel poverty through the English House Condition Survey, with figures for 2003 becoming available in April 2005.

According to the 2001 English House Condition Survey, around 700,000 (3.3 per cent.) of dwellings in England used oil-fired central heating as their main form of space heating. Of these households, around 150,000 are likely to be vulnerable households in fuel poverty. Estimated heating oil prices for 2004 are around 20 per cent. higher than those in 2001. This will have increased the number of vulnerable households in fuel poverty who use heating oil. There are a number of uncertainties about exactly how many households will be brought into fuel poverty by changes in the price of heating oil, but it is likely to be significantly less than 50,000 vulnerable households.

The Government remain committed to achieving their target of seeking an end to the problem of fuel poverty in England in vulnerable households by 2010 as far as is reasonably practicable. Additionally, any potential increase in the numbers can be set against the very real progress that has been made: the number of households in fuel poverty in the UK has fallen by over three million since 1996, to 2.25 million in 2002 and further reductions are expected in 2003.

IT Policy Breaches

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many staff in her Department have *(a)* received official warnings and *(b)* faced disciplinary procedures following breaches of IT policy in each year since 1997. [205817]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: Information is not available for 1997, 1998 and 1999 as details of disciplinary offences are not normally retained for periods of longer than five years.

IT related disciplinary offences in Department of Trade and Industry

	Number of staff who faced disciplinary proceedings	*Number of staff receiving formal warnings*
2000	2	2
2001	5	5
2002	5	4
2003	7	7
2004 (to date)	12	10

Manufacturing Advisers

Mr. Donohoe: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what the average time spent by advisers from the Manufacturing Advisory Service on *(a)* diagnostic and *(b)* advisory visits was in the last year for which figures are available; [206037]

(2) what the average time spent by advisers from the Manufacturing Advisory Service on diagnostic and advisory visits was in the latest year for which figures are available. [206298]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 20 December 2004]:* The Manufacturing Advisory Service (MAS) provides four levels of service:

Level 1

Handling of telephone and on-line inquiries from manufacturing companies.

Level 2

Diagnostic visits by manufacturing advisors of a up to a day in duration (average figures are not compiled.

Level 3

Training events, seminars and workshops.

Level 4

In-depth consultancy up to 10 days.

Miners' Compensation

Mr. Clapham: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when using lie detecting speech technology to assess former miners providing information in connection with their claims for work-related illness and their families was first proposed to the Department; and by which agency. [206714]

Nigel Griffiths *[holding answer 21 December 2004]:* The Department is continually looking at ways in which it can speed up valid claims and using speech technology to do this is one option, which officials explored. Initial discussions involving the Department's contractors took place in October. I have since made it clear that there is no intention to use such technology..

Mr. Clapham: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether lie detecting speech technology has been piloted on former miners claiming damages for work-related illnesses and their families by the *(a)* without the knowledge of the claimant and *(b)* with the knowledge of her Department. [206715]

Nigel Griffiths *[holding answer 21 December 2004]:* No such trials have been conducted.

Mr. Clapham: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether the proposed use of lie detecting speech technology on former miners claiming damages for work-related illnesses and their families was discussed with the claimants' group of solicitors. [206716]

Nigel Griffiths *[holding answer 21 December 2004]:* Speech technology is increasingly being used by the insurance industry to speed up claims handling. Its use to speed up the handling process for vibration services claims (where a significant number are proving to be exaggerated) was explored by officials. I have made it clear that there is no intention to proceed with the use of such technology and consequently no discussions with the claimants' groups of solicitors has been necessary.

Nuclear Decommissioning Authority

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether activities of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority have been declared outwith EU treaty rules on state aids. [203762]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: No. The activities of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) have not been declared outwith EC treaty rules on state aid. We notified the European Commission of our intention to support the creation of the NDA in December 2003. The Commission announced a formal investigation into state aid to the NDA on 1 December 2004. This announcement confirmed that the transitional arrangements under which the NDA will start work on 1 April 2005 do not involve state aid. We will work closely with the Commission throughout their investigation.

Office of Gas and Electricity Markets

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what salary is paid to the *(a)* chair, *(b)* chief executive and *(c)* board members of the Office of Gas and Electricity Markets; and how many hours work per week each is expected to undertake. [207022]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The chairman of the Gas and Electricity Markets Authority (the authority), under whose direction the Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (Ofgem) operates, receives £90,000 pa for three days work per week. The non-executive members receive £20,000 pa for about three days work a month.

Executive members of the authority are paid as full-time senior managers of Ofgem and do not receive any additional salary in respect of their appointment to the authority. The chief executive is paid in the range £160,000 to £165,000 and the other executives are paid in the range of £110,000 to £135,000

Public Procurement (EC Rules)

John Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps she is taking to ensure EU partners effectively implement EC rules on public procurement. [199818]

Ms Hewitt: My right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer recently asked Alan Wood of Seimens UK to investigate British business experiences of competing for public contracts in other EU countries.

His report was published in November 2004 and can be found at http://www.ogc.gov.uk/index.asp?docid = 1001521.

The Government will continue to push for a consistent approach to public procurement across the EU, and to provide assistance where appropriate within EU regulations to ensure British business can compete and win such contracts.

Regional Venture Capital Fund

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will break down the funding from the Regional Venture Capital Fund programme by industrial sector. [206132]

Nigel Griffiths: As follows is a break down of investments, as at 30 November 2004, by industrial sector.

	Number
Communications	27
Computer Related	49
Other Electronic Related	14
Biotechnology	10
Medical/Health Related	10
Energy	0
Consumer Related	23
Industrial Products and Services	15
Chemicals and Materials	3
Industrial Automation	5
Other Manufacturing	20
Transportation	0
Financial Services	0
Other Services	34
Agriculture	0
Construction	3
Other	5
Total:	218

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will list the enterprises in England which have received funding from the Regional Venture Capital Fund in the last 12 months; and how much was received by each enterprise. [206134]

Nigel Griffiths: Each RVCF is legally bound by a commercial confidential Limited Partnership Agreement (LPA). The Department being an investor in each RVCF, and a signatory of the LPA is unable to provide the information requested.

Missing Departmental Property

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many items of civil service property within her Department are unaccounted for, broken down by type. [205571]

Ms Hewitt: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply I gave to his question number 206375 earlier today.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will list the property belonging to her Department that has been *(a)* stolen and *(b)* reported lost in each year since 1997, broken down by type of article. [206375]

Ms Hewitt: My Department's records do not readily differentiate between items reported as stolen or lost. A breakdown between the two is not held in an easily accessible form and can, therefore, be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

However, the details of all missing official property, i.e. items used for official purposes, but some of which may actually be owned by the Department's contractors, are set out as follows for each of the years requested. (It should be noted that some of the laptops and mobile telephones listed may have been personal items belonging to members of staff).

	Item missing	Number of items
1997	Answering machine	2
1998	Laptop computer	1
	Mobile phone and charger	1
	IT equipment	
	Answer phone and handset	1
1999	Telephone and answer phone	1
	Hewlett Packard desk printer	1
	Mobile phone	4
	Dictaphone	2
	Laptop computers	2
	Computer printer	1
	Answer phone/telephone	3
	Cordless drill, charger and spirit level	1
	Computer/monitor/mouse	1
2000	Mobile phone	6
	Lap top computer	2
	Dictaphone	1
	Digital camera	1
	Colour scanner	1
	TV and video player	1
2001	Mobile phone	7
	Lap top computer	7
	Modem and lead	1
	Big screen flat computer	1
	Digital camera	1
2002	Mobile phone	22
	Laptop computer	27
	Computer flat screen	8
	Floppy disc and C drive	1
	Computer base unit	2
	Mini DVD player	1
	Fax machine	1
	Camcorder	1
	Multimedia speakers	1
	Flat screen computer	1
	Digital camera	1
	Lipro projector	1
	Drive for laptop	1
	Glass screen filter	1
	Monitor riser	1
	Mesh screen filter	1
	Mobile phone charger	1
	Personal digital assistant	1
	Laminating machine	1
	Dyno labelling machine	1
	Laser jet printer	1
	Data projector	1
	PDA palm VX	1
	Palm top organiser	1
	Pocket PC with cable	1
2003	Mobile phone	22
	Laptop computer	37
	Computer flat screen	3
	Vacuum cleaners	3
	Ladders	3
	Computer mouse	2
	Answer machine	1
	CD writer and cables	1
	Cordless drill and attachments	1
	Battery phone charger	1
	Sky viewing card	1
	Mouse and keyboard	1
	Projector and screen	1
	Docking station	1
	Computer memory card	1
	Conference phone	1
	External CD driver	1
	Digital camera	1
	Palm top organiser	1
	Business card scanner	1
2004	Mobile phone	26
	Laptop computer	20
	Adjustable spanners	2
	Multi meters (measuring electricity)	2
	Infrared thermometers	2
	Camera and torch and batteries	1
	TV remote control	1
	Portable TVs	2
	Computer keyboard	1
	Computer mice	3
	Cordless mice	2
	Universal serial bus (IT connection device)	12
	Fujitsu—Siemen LOOx PDA	2
	Broadband router box	1
	PC with flat screen	1
	Kitchen knives (from restaurant)	—
	Digital camera	1
	Memory stick	1
	Floppy drive	1

Swan Hunter

Mr. Viggers: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what financial support the Department has given to the Swan Hunter shipyard in the last 30 years. [206389]

Jacqui Smith: Swan Hunter (Shipbuilders) Ltd went into receivership in 1993 and all records related to DTI contact with them have been archived. Consequently, information on financial support to that defunct company could only be obtained at disproportionate cost. Swan Hunter (Tyneside) Ltd was established in 1995. Since then, DTI has awarded just one grant of £1.2 million in September 2000 under the Regional Selective Assistance programme.

Trade and Industry Conferences

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) which international trade and industry conferences have been attended by members of the Government in the past 12 months; on what occasions Labour Members have attended such conferences as part of the official delegation; and what places she has made available to Opposition parties to attend these conferences as part of the official delegation; [203944]

(2) whether all the places offered to the Government for delegates to attend international trade and industry conferences during the last 12 months have been filled. [203945]

Mr. Alexander: The range and format of international trade and industry conferences is broad. Attendance at such conferences by members of the Government, Labour hon. Members and opposition party members is on the basis of business need and meeting international obligations. The Government does not collate data on the range of trade and industry conferences, the allocation of invitations and the acceptance figures for delegates attending. Full details could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Women Staff

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many women there are in senior positions in her Department. [205557]

Ms Hewitt: In my Department 20 of the top management posts are filled by women. This is 33 per cent. of the total number of DTI Senior Civil Servants in Pay Bands 2 and 3.

TRANSPORT

A628 Mottram Bypass

Mr. Tim Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the future of the A628 Mottram Bypass, with particular reference to the spur to Glossop. [207610]

Mr. Darling: The proposed A628 Mottram to Tintwistle Bypass is a trunk road scheme promoted by the Highways Agency. Subject to successful completion of statutory procedures, the scheme is expected to commence construction in 2007–08.

The proposed Glossop Spur is a local road scheme promoted by Tameside Metropolitan borough council. This scheme was provisionally approved for funding through the local transport programme in December 2000. Final funding approval will be considered following completion of the necessary statutory processes and value for money assessments and in the light of discussions with the region about the prioritisation of schemes and the availability of resources.

Aircraft Security

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what discussions he has had with British airline operators with regard to concerns expressed by insurance companies over the costs of potential damage arising from the use of a radioactive dirty bomb on an aircraft. [202806]

Charlotte Atkins: None.

Bus Lanes

Jane Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he will issue regulations to allow camera enforcement of bus lanes outside London; and if he will make a statement. [206893]

Charlotte Atkins: It is intended that the bus lane enforcement regulations, which will allow camera enforcement of bus lanes outside London, will be made in spring 2005.

Concorde

Lembit Öpik: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations the Government has received from *(a)* industry and *(b)* the public regarding options for restoring a Concorde aircraft to flying condition; and if he will make a statement. [207122]

Charlotte Atkins: The Government has not received any representations from industry about restoring a Concorde aircraft to flying condition. Between April 2003 and December 2004, the Department for Transport received 164 letters from the public on this subject, including a 20,000 signature petition from the 'Save Concorde Group'.

Restoring Concorde aircraft to flying condition is a matter for British Airways as the owner and operator of the UK Concorde fleet.

Lembit Öpik: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport who owns the patent for the technical specifications, diagrams and related items for Concorde; and if he will make a statement. [207123]

Charlotte Atkins: Airbus UK and Airbus Industrie together own the design data, technical specifications, diagrams and related items for the Concorde fleet.

Selling or transferring this data to a third party is a commercial matter for Airbus.

Conferences

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many conferences were *(a)* attended by officials from his Department, *(b)* cancelled by and *(c)* facilitated by his Department in each year since 1997; and what the (i) cost to the Department and (ii) location was in each case. [205762]

Charlotte Atkins: This information is not held centrally and to collate it would incur disproportionate cost.

Congestion

Sir Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether the Government plans to publish annual figures on levels of congestion in the UK following the publication of the new congestion measure and accompanying target in 2005. [206568]

Charlotte Atkins: Progress against all Public Service Agreement targets is reported every spring in departmental reports, with updates provided in autumn performance reports. We also intend to publish annual long-term projections of congestion.

Correspondence

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what his target time is in 2004–05 *(a)* to reply to letters from hon. Members and *(b)* for the officials in his Office to reply to letters received directly from members of the public. [202420]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department aims to reply to all letters as soon as possible and has a target time for replying to letters from hon. Members of 15 working days from their receipt. Information on the departmental handling of correspondence from Members of Parliament/Peers is published annually by the Cabinet Office. The 2003 annual report is available in the Library of the House.

There is currently no target time for replying to letters received by the Central Department from members of the public. The Department's executive agencies do have target times for replying to such letters, which are:

	Number of working days
Highways Agency	15
Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency	10
Driving Standards Agency	10
Vehicle and Operator Services Agency	15
Vehicle Certification Agency	5
Maritime and Coastguard Agency	10

Crossrail

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many *(a)* consultants and *(b)* employees are employed by the Crossrail project team. [207608]

Mr. Darling: At Cross London Rail Links Ltd. (CLRL) 101 staff are employed on the Crossrail project. A number of consultancy firms provide expertise to CLRL to plan the railway and develop bill documentation. The number of consultants employed from time to time is dependent on the volume of work being undertaken. Currently, there are 90 consultants employed on the project.

At the Department for Transport the full-time equivalent of nine staff plus an advisory team of four consultants are currently employed on the project.

Departmental Credit Cards

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many credit cards for official expenditure are held by his Department. [206435]

Charlotte Atkins: None. The Department uses charge cards for official expenditure. 2,244 charge cards are currently held by the central Department and its agencies.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the cost has been of criminal damage to his Department's buildings in each of the last two years. [202418]

Charlotte Atkins: The cost of criminal damage in DfT for 2002–03 was £27,423. In 2003–04 the cost was £74,080 although this included £13,127 for the cost of security guarding at a DVLA Local Office which was an additional cost arising from criminal damage.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much has been spent by his Department on *(a)* new furniture and *(b)* hired furniture in each year since 1997. [205614]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department for Transport was formed in May 2002 and as a result the information provided relates to the period covering 2002–03 and 2003–04.

We are unable to be specific about the costs of furniture or furniture hire alone as the costs are often recorded in a general furniture and fittings budget which includes the provision of other accommodation supplies. To specifically identify cost information for just furniture across the Department's large estate would involve disproportionate cost. However, DfT Central comprising DfT HQ in London and Hastings, the Air Accidents and Marine Accidents Investigation Branches and the Mobility Advice and Vehicle Information Service spent £0.073 million on furniture and fittings in 2002–03 and £1.519 million in 2003–04. The six DfT agencies together spent £2.016 million in 2002–03 and £2.659 million in 2003–04.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the cost of refurbishments in his Department was in each year since 1997; and what the planned expenditure is for 2005–06. [205676]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department for Transport was formed in May 2002 and as a result the information provided only relates from the years 2002–03 onwards:

For details on refurbishment costs for 2002–03 and 2003–04, I would refer the hon. Member to my answer of 20 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1355W, to the hon. Member for Buckingham (Mr. Bercow). The forecast outturn for 2004–05 and estimated spend for 2005–06 are set out in the following table but figures are subject to change depending on priorities and budget allocations.

DfT Unit	*Refurbishment cost outturn 2004–05 (£ million)*	*Refurbishment costs estimated spend 2005–06 (£ million)*
DfT Headquarters	0.460	0.150
Air Accidents Investigation Branch	0	0.025
Driving Standards Agency	0.396	0.200
Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency	4.211	[1]3.850
Highways Agency	0	0.800
Marine Accident Investigation Branch	0.045	0
Maritime and Coastguard Agency	1.100	0.260
Vehicle and Operator Services Agency	0.199	0.400
Vehicle Certification Agency	0	0
TOTAL	6.411	5.685

[1] DVLA will be entering into a large PFI contract in 2005–06 which includes services and amongst other items the refurbishment of a large portion of the Morriston estate in Swansea which is estimated to cost approximately £31million. It is not possible at this stage to allocate in which year these costs will be incurred.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much has been spent by his Department on lighting in each year since 1997. [205869]

Charlotte Atkins: This information is not collected centrally and is not available without disproportionate cost. The costs of providing the lighting equipment are often undifferentiated from other mechanical and electrical service costs and are not accounted for separately in the individual finance systems. The energy consumption used by lighting is not measured specifically and therefore the costs are not identified separately from the general energy costs of electrical equipment across the DfT estate.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much the Department spent on first-class travel in each year since 1997. [206576]

Charlotte Atkins: Neither the records kept by the Department for Transport, nor those of its Executive Agencies, differentiate between first class and standard class travel. The information can only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

All travel undertaken by Ministers and civil servants in the Department for Transport complied with the requirements of the Ministerial Code, Travel by Ministers, and the Civil Service Management Code.

Departmental Properties

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many properties are held by the Department; what total floor space these properties provide; how many properties are vacant; and how much floor space vacant properties comprise. [206486]

Charlotte Atkins: The property details for the Department as at 1 December 2004 are shown in the attached table:

Department for Transport Unit	*No of Properties*	*Total Floor Space ALA (m^2)*	*No. Vacant Properties*	*Vacant Floor Space ALA (m^2)*
Department for Transport HQ	3	19,002	0	0
Air Accidents Investigation Branch (AAIB)	1	4,836	0	0
Marine Accidents Investigations Branch (MAIB)	1	820	0	0
Mobility Advice and Information Vehicle Service (MAVIS)	1	786	0	0
Driving Standards Agency (DSA)	460	43,828	1	185
Driving and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA)	55	90,491	1	385
Highways Agency (HA)	546	51,700	76	Not Recorded
Marine and Coastguard Agency (MCA)	501	41,795	3	552
Vehicle and Operator Service Agency (VOSA)	111	113,500	0	0
Vehicle Certification Agency (VGA)	2	2,160	0	0
Total	1,681	368,918	81	[1]1,122

[1] Does not include HA vacant floor space (unrecorded).

Notes:

1. ALA—Agents Letting Area
2. The figures for HA include 495 residential properties relating to the Targeted Programme of Improvement in the strategic road network and floor space data for these properties are not held.
3. The MCA figures include helicopter sites and remote radio sites;
4. VOSA figures include operational test stations.

Ethnic Minorities

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the extent to which his Department's policies are meeting the needs of ethnic minorities. [205800]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department for Transport is committed to valuing diversity and promoting equality. We published our first Race Equality Scheme on 31 March 2003. The Scheme covers the activities of the Department and its Executive Agencies as an employer as well as a policy maker and service provider.

The Scheme has built on the results of extensive research, which the Department has carried out to identify the specific transport needs of people from different ethnic and faith communities.

Race Equality Impact Assessments are being completed across all areas of our business to inform the preparation of a departmental action plan which will feature as part of the revised Departmental Race Equality Scheme for the period 2005 -08. This will be available on the departmental website from April 2005.

In addition to this, the DfT and its Agencies follow Cabinet Office guidelines on consultation to ensure policies meet the needs of ethnic minorities in the first instance and for employees we make use of in-house staff networks to monitor policies/practices which have been implemented.

First Group

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) whether the Strategic Rail Authority will take account of the actions of First Group in the United States when deciding on the franchise of the east coast line; [206821]

(2) whether it is within the remit of the Strategic Rail Authority to take into account the poor punctuality and reliability of First Group's buses when deciding on the franchise of the East Coast Line. [206822]

Mr. McNulty: The Directions and Guidance to the SRA set out the factors to be considered when letting a franchise. However, the SRA are not specifically required to take into account any non-rail operations undertaken by bidders. The SRA issued formal Invitations to Tender for the ICEC franchise on 6 October 2004 and are currently evaluating the bids.

The new recently announced pre-qualification questionnaire arrangements for use in the forthcoming Greater Western and Thameslink/GN franchises will take account of an operator's past performance.

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what action his Department will take to ensure that First Group's Yellow buses meet safety requirements. [206833]

Mr. Jamieson: The First Group yellow school buses that are currently being trialled are required to comply with the same safety regulations as any passenger service vehicle operating on the public highway.

Freedom Pass

Clive Efford: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the cost of operating the freedom pass was to local authorities in London in the last year for which figures are available; and how many pensioners are eligible from each constituency. [207268]

Charlotte Atkins: The Freedom Pass scheme is managed and operated on behalf of the London boroughs by the Association of London Government (ALG), who report that the scheme cost £169 million in 2003–04. No data are available on the number of eligible pensioners in each parliamentary constituency.

HSE Staff (Relocation)

Mr. MacDougall: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether Health and Safety Executive staff will be relocated as a result of their transfer to the Office of the Rail Regulator. [207060]

Mr. McNulty: This matter is being considered by the Health and Safety Executive and the Office of Rail Regulation as part of the transition programme. No decisions about location have yet been taken.

Local Transport Plans

Sir Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if his Department will seek to ensure that local authority expenditure on the local road network matches central Government allocations over the five-year period of the local transport plans. [206571]

Mr. Jamieson: Most revenue and capital allocations for the local road network are indicative and are not ring fenced. It is for local authorities to decide priorities for spending their resources on the various services they provide.

M40

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what traffic and noise projections were made for the stretch of the M40 that passes through the Chilterns at the time of its widening in 1991; and if he will make a statement. [206636]

Mr. Jamieson: The M40 passes through the Chilterns between junctions 4 and 5. This stretch of motorway was widened in 1990–91. Traffic and noise projections will have been produced as part of the preparation for this widening scheme. The Highways Agency holds some historical records for past motorway and trunk road schemes and extensive searches of its archives have produced extracts which have been placed in the Libraries of the House.

The noise related figures are taken from a report commissioned in 1988 and the traffic figures are taken from a report of the feasibility study in 1987. Both of these reports were commissioned prior to the widening scheme commencing. The Highways Agency is continuing to search for the full report, however earlier searches have not been successful.

Motorways

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of how the development of high occupancy vehicle lanes will affect the flow of traffic on motorways. [206380]

Mr. Jamieson: The benefit of high occupancy vehicle lanes is that they facilitate the movement of more people per lane, reducing peak hour travel times while maintaining safety and reducing pollution. The introduction of the lanes should result in some drivers choosing to leave their cars at home or a convenient parking point and car share with others. This should result in a net decrease in traffic on the motorway, on the local network leading to the motorway and on the return journey home. This should help to reduce congestion associated with each of these journeys.

Rail Organisation

Mr. Hopkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has made of how many staff will be employed in his Department's new rail organisation; and how the estimate was calculated. [207473]

Mr. McNulty: I estimate that the total number of staff which will be employed in the new Rail Group of the Department for Transport after the transfer of responsibilities from the Strategic Rail Authority to the Secretary of State will be in the region of 250–300. This compares with a total of about 530 people currently employed in the SRA and the Rail Directorates of the Department. The estimate is an indicative figure, based on the new approach to the strategic direction of the rail industry outlined in "The Future of Rail" and discussions with key figures in the Authority and other industry organisations. It will be refined during further design work which will take place early in 2005.

Railway Bridge (Colindale)

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will assist in bearing the cost of widening the railway bridge over Aerodrome road, Colindale; and if he will make a statement. [206987]

Mr. McNulty: Following the establishment of the Mayor for London in 2000, responsibility for allocating capital funding for London borough local transport schemes, such as widening of the Aerodrome road bridges in Colindale, was transferred from central Government to Transport for London.

Special Advisers

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many special advisers there are in the Department, broken down by Civil Service pay grade. [206504]

Charlotte Atkins: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Minister for the Cabinet Office on 21 December 2004 *Official Report*, column 1640W.

Stolen Property

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many civil servants from his Department have *(a)* faced disciplinary proceedings as a result of allegations of theft, *(b)* been charged with theft and *(c)* been dismissed following theft allegations in each year since 1997. [206398]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department for Transport was established in May 2002 following machinery of Government changes. The Department's policy setting out disciplinary action that might be taken against staff accused of theft is contained in the Departmental Staff Handbook.

Since the Department was established, one member of staff was investigated for alleged theft. The individual was not subsequently charged with theft. This was in 2003.

Strategic Rail Authority

Mr. Hopkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what the current grading structure of the Strategic Rail Authority is; what the *(a)* pay minimum and *(b)* pay maximum is for each grade; and what the equivalent civil service grade is for each SRA grade; [207474]

(2) how many staff are employed in the Strategic Rail Authority broken down by grade. [207475]

Mr. McNulty: The information requested is as follows:

SRA grade	*Pay band minimum (£)*	*Pay band maximum (£)*	*Number of staff in grade*	*Equivalent DfT pay band*
A	12,916	17,238	3	Pay band 1
B	16,177	24,852	40	Pay band 2
C	22,713	34,677	95	Pay bands 3/4
D	32,479	48,906	101	Pay bands 5/6
E	46,643	65,271	81	Pay band 7
F	54,761	114,999	67	SCS band 1
G	75,570	158,808	40	SCS band 2
H	90,000	192,000	11	SCS band 3
Total			438	

Notes:

1. As at 1 December 2004.

2. Staff numbers exclude Rail Passengers' Council.

3. "Equivalent" means having pay falling into broadly the same range as the relevant SRA grade.

Tilbury Town Railway Bridge

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will instruct his officials to visit the railway bridge at Tilbury Town to examine its compliance with disability and mobility rights legislation. [205663]

Mr. McNulty: It is the responsibility of the railway operators to comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. The Strategic Rail Authority (SRA) provides guidance to operators about making train and station services accessible for disabled passengers. I have been informed by the SRA that the train operating company responsible for Tilbury Town station, c2c, is investigating the possibility of providing ramp access to the footbridge to improve accessibility for disabled passengers.

Timetable Changes (Maidenhead)

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representation his Department has received regarding the recent timetable changes on routes from Paddington to Maidenhead and Twyford. [207590]

Mr. McNulty: The Department for Transport has received a small number of representations requesting information or expressing concern about the changes to the service pattern from Maidenhead and Twyford to London that were implemented in the December timetable change.

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what action his Department proposes to take to reduce overcrowding and ensure safety following the introduction of the new train timetable on routes from Paddington to Maidenhead and Twyford. [207591]

Mr. McNulty: Trains are designed to operate safely when fully loaded. The Strategic Rail Authority will meet First Great Western Link (FOWL) during January to assess crowding and identify with FOWL any action necessary.

Train Overcrowding

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what guidance is given to train operating companies on preventing dangerous levels of overcrowding on commuter trains. [207589]

Mr. McNulty: Commuter train operators are required to carry out passenger counts to demonstrate that adequate capacity is provided to accommodate the passengers expected throughout the morning and evening peak periods. This ensures that franchise operators properly address the issue of capacity requirements in peak periods, whilst accepting that the railway provides a walk-on service, that forecasting demand in advance is not an exact science and that loadings, even on the same train, can vary from day to day or week to week.

Transport Projects (Coventry)

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the level of investment in local transport projects in Coventry was in the last year for which figures are available; and how much was spent in the West Midlands region during the period. [206966]

Charlotte Atkins: Capital expenditure on local transport projects in Coventry during 2003–04 amounted to £6.437 million. Expenditure across the West Midlands region for 2003–04 totalled £187.936 million. Figures are taken from the 2004 Annual Progress Reports for Local Transport Plans.

Vehicle Registration

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the cost has been of providing new style V5C registration certificates to comply with the European Directive on harmonising vehicle registration certificates, and what the estimated total costs, including postage costs, will be of the replacement of all UK vehicle registration certificates. [206630]

Mr. Jamieson: The European Directive 1999/37/EC, which came into effect on 1 June 2004, requires all member states to introduce a common format for vehicle registration certificates. This is intended to facilitate the identification of vehicles in international traffic and in re-registration in other member states.

The costs directly related to the design and preparation of the forms and project planning were approximately £0.9 million, with a further £5.2 million system change and development costs to accommodate the additional information now held and printed onto the new harmonised registration certificates.

The legislation does not require the replacement of existing documents until a reissue is requested, so that additional running costs would not have been incurred. However, it was decided to embark on an accelerated circulation of existing registration documents (V5s) and to replace these existing certificates in line with the annual registration/licensing process:

> to avoid the problem and confusion of multiple versions of certificates in circulation (there are already at least four formats currently valid for the UK);
>
> to isolate motorists who have not kept their registration current with DVLA through licensing (including SORN), hence bearing down on those who are not complying with the law.

This was an important adjunct to the Continuous Registration process and is intended to help in reducing the number of vehicles without current registration, according to DVLA's Secretary of State performance target.

The current forecast for the total costs associated with this accelerated process, which has six months yet to run to completion are £9.3 million.

Working Time Regulations

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many officials working in ministerial private offices in the Department have worked more than a 48-hour week at any time in the last 12 months for which figures are available; how many of those had signed a waiver under working time regulations; and what percentage these figures represented of the total in each case. [204136]

Charlotte Atkins: The working time regulations provide workers with the protection of a limit of an average of 48 hours a week working time. This is not an absolute cap of 48 hours in any one week. This average is normally calculated over a 17-week reference period, although this can be longer in certain situations (26 weeks) and can be extended by agreement (up to 52 weeks). Workers may choose to work more than 48 hours per week over this reference period by signing an opt-out agreement, but employers cannot force a worker to sign an opt-out and workers cannot be subjected to detriment for refusing to sign an opt-out.

In the past year, a total of 26 individuals working in ministerial private offices have worked more than 48 hours in at least one week. This total reflects a number of staff changes during the course of the year. There are currently 11 staff working in ministerial private offices who have signed an opt-out. Given the changes of staff during the year, it is not meaningful to calculate this as a percentage of the total of 26.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Animal Welfare

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) if she will make a statement on the level of protection afforded to circus animals in the Animal Welfare Bill; [206623]

(2) what discussions her Department has had with circuses over the welfare of their animals; [206624]

(3) if she will make a statement on the future of animals in circuses in the light of regulations to be introduced under the Animal Welfare Bill. [206625]

Mr. Bradshaw: Our proposals under the Animal Welfare Bill will improve significantly the welfare of all animals used in entertainment, including animals performing in circuses. The introduction of the welfare offence means that the owner or keeper of an animal is required to take reasonable steps to ensure its welfare. This will enable the courts to take action where an animal although not currently suffering is being kept in a way that will cause eventual suffering.

The contents of the Bill have been subject to public consultation and pre- legislative scrutiny. This has enabled a wide range of animal keepers, including the keepers of circus animals, to make their views known.

It is our intention, through regulations under the Bill, to license all performing animal trainers. We propose that inspectors will be given the right of entry to all premises where performing animals are kept or are performing, including winter holding quarters. The regulations would be backed up by a code of practice which would set out welfare standards. The regulations and code would be subject to public consultation and parliamentary scrutiny.

Bass

Mr. Streeter: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the *(a)* value and *(b)* potential value of sea angling for bass in UK inshore waters on a recreational and commercial hook and line fishing basis only. [200047]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 29 November 2004]*: The value of commercial landings of bass by line gear used by the UK fleet was approximately £354,000 in 2003. The proportion of this figure relating to landings in inshore waters is not available. Although a report by Drew Associates, commissioned by Defra, and published in July 2004, provided information on the economic contribution of sea angling in England and Wales, this did not provide information relating solely to bass so recent data on the value of this activity is not available. However, as part of the process of taking forward the recommendations in net benefits report from the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit, we will be reviewing the evidence for re-designating commercially caught species for wholly recreational sea angling, beginning with bass.

Bass Trawler Fishing

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent assessment she has made of the impact of bass trawler fishing on *(a)* dolphin welfare and *(b)* the size of the dolphin population. [201734]

Mr. Bradshaw: Defra-funded research identified a dolphin bycatch problem in the pair trawl fishery for bass and trials, which concluded in spring 2004, demonstrated that mitigation devices were not sufficiently developed to reduce this bycatch in the short-term. This was why I approached the European Commission for an emergency closure of this fishery and, in the light of the Commission's rejection of the UK case, announced my intention to prohibit pelagic pair trawling for bass within 12 miles of the south west coast.

When our request for an emergency closure was put to the Commission it was understood that the relevant population of common dolphins was approximately 120,000. More recent abundance estimates show however that the population is several times this figure. Although dolphin bycatch may not now be considered a significant threat to the conservation of the species, I intend to continue with bycatch reduction measures to comply with commitments to minimise bycatch and to reduce it to its lowest level.

Bee Disease

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the impact of planned reductions in funding on the Bee Health Programme. [204554]

Brian Cotter: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what plans the Government have for funding the Honey Bee Health Programme; and what assessment she has made of the impact these plans would have on monitoring the infectious diseases of bees; [205291]

(2) what assessment she has made of the help that is available to amateur beekeepers to control infectious diseases of bees. [205292]

Alun Michael: The Department recognises the importance of its bee health programme to the beekeeping sector in England. Through the National Bee Unit, we are providing a free diagnostic and inspection service to beekeepers for notifiable pests and diseases, as well as an extensive training and education programme to help them become more self-reliant through improved apiary management.

It is intended that the proposed 20 per cent. cut in funding should be concentrated on the field force of the Bee Diseases Inspectorate. The capacity of the National Bee Unit to provide scientific services which are essential to the identification and control of bee diseases will be substantially maintained but we shall be asking beekeepers to take a greater measure of responsibility for dealing with varroasis and European foul brood, diseases for which effective means of control are in place or under development.

We shall be working closely with beekeeping associations to manage these changes and the risks attached to them during the three years before they are fully implemented.

Carbon Dioxide Emissions

Mr. Jack: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs by how much carbon dioxide emissions have changed in each year of the operation of the climate change levy. [203045]

Mr. Morley: The Climate Change Levy started operating in 2001 and the table gives estimated total UK emissions of carbon dioxide emissions since 2000. The estimates are consistent with those published in the Consultation Paper for the Review of the UK Climate Change Programme.

	Total UK CO_2 emissions (million tonnes/yr)
2000	559.8
2001	575.0
2002	555.5
2003	563.6

The data incorporate recent revisions to the carbon emission factors for coal used in power generation and for natural gas. The next inventory submission to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is due in April 2005, and will complete the incorporation of new data on carbon emission factors, and contain revised estimates carbon emissions from land-use change and forestry, as set out on the Consultation Paper.

China

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the outcome of the recent discussions in China on matters within her responsibilities, attended by the Minister for Environment and Agri-Environment. [200707]

Mr. Morley: I led a British water industry mission to Beijing (21–24 November), Wuhan (24–25 November) and Guangzhou (25–26 November). The principal objectives of my visit were to raise the profile in China of the UK water industry, to open doors for the business delegation and to demonstrate UK business commitment to the market.

Nine companies were given opportunities to share their experience and expertise with their Chinese counterparts and relevant Government authorities. The visit encouraged greater future co-operation between the UK and China at municipal, provincial and central Government levels. I understand that as a result these companies have made a great number of useful contacts and positioned themselves to pursue particular business opportunities in China.

I was also able to raise the profile of the UK-China Water and Wastewater which had its inaugural meeting during my visit. I understand that this was also successful and will lead to greater cooperation on policy and trade issues.

I also held discussions with Ministers and officials in a number of key ministries on other Defra interests including sustainable development, climate change and illegal logging. There are benefits from closer cooperation with China in all these areas of policy.

Finally, I took the opportunity to discuss the environment contribution to the UK's year of science in China which begins in January.

Christmas Cards

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the cost of postage was for official Departmental Christmas cards in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004. [205189]

Alun Michael: The postage costs for official cards for 2003 was 264 and in respect of 2004 is anticipated to be £296.

This was calculated by multiplying second class postage against the volume of cards sent.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the cost was of purchasing official departmental Christmas cards in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004. [205203]

Alun Michael: Costs for Defra Official Season's Greetings cards are as follows:

	£
2003	7,295
2004	2,659

These figures include costs for artwork, purchase of photographs, printing and envelopes.

Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Bill

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will include in forthcoming environmental legislation, with particular reference to the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Bill, measures to deal with the proliferation of signage in rural areas. [205495]

Alun Michael: Measures are already in place to prevent the proliferation of signage in both rural and urban areas. The relevant regulations are the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisement) Regulations 1992. It is an offence for any person to display an advertisement in contravention of these regulations and local authorities have powers of enforcement. The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Bill contains provisions to improve these existing controls and new Regulations and guidance will be issued next year.

Signs that comply with the statutory requirements for traffic signs (as specified in section 64 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984) are exempt from the Town and Country Planning controls. However, they must comply with the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2002 (SI 3113) or be specially authorised by the Secretary of State (or Scottish Ministers or Welsh Assembly Government in Scotland and Wales). Department for Transport's guidance also advises on the avoidance of sign proliferation.

Climate Change Conference

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the outcome of the Tenth Conference of the parties to the United Nations Convention on Climate Change, held in Buenos Aires from 6–17 December; and what progress was made in persuading the United States Administration to commit to post-Kyoto 2012 actions to mitigate climate change. [205531]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 20 December 2004]:* We and our EU partners had two key objectives for the negotiations in Buenos Aires and both were successfully achieved. The Conference agreed to develop a work plan to address the adaptation needs of the developing countries most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. And the Conference, including the United States, also took the first step towards tackling the huge challenge of climate change beyond the 1st Kyoto Protocol commitment period, by deciding to hold an informal seminar next year which will discuss how we can continue to develop effective and appropriate responses to climate change.

Coastal and Flood Defence

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will separate the budgets for coastal defence works from that for flood defence works. [206609]

Mr. Morley: The budgets are currently managed jointly as coastal processes affecting flood and erosion risks are hard to separate and such risks need to be managed together in many cases. We also see significant difficulties in separating budgets for river and sea flooding as all flood risks, including those arising in estuaries, need to be managed holistically and prioritised jointly. The Environment Agency, working though regional flood defence committees, leads in all flood risk management issues.

We have, however, recently consulted on a new Government strategy for flood and coastal erosion risk management in England, as part of which we are considering the future arrangements in coastal areas. We aim to publish a first response to this in spring 2005.

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much will be allocated to the maritime authorities for costal defence projects in 2005–06. [206665]

Mr. Morley: The total allocation for grant and Supported Capital Expenditure (Revenue) for local authorities for 2005–06 is £47 million. This will be spent on both inland and coastal improvement projects to reduce risk but by far the greater part will be invested by maritime councils on coastal projects.

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the estimated cost of beach nourishment on the Eccles on Sea to Winterton section of the Norfolk coast is for the years 2004 to 2014. [206666]

Mr. Morley: The Environment Agency is the principal authority responsible for flood risk in England. The Eccles to Winterton coastline is the subject of regular monitoring by the Agency and I understand that a review of the sea defence strategy for this frontage is nearing completion. It is currently anticipated that expenditure in the order of £11.4 million will be required for beach nourishment and associated works over the five year period 2005–06 to 2009–10 inclusive.

Predictions beyond this period are less certain but, for budgeting purposes, the Environment Agency is assuming a further £11 million for the succeeding five years to 2014–15.

Implementation of these works will be dependent upon their satisfying the Government's criteria for public funding.

Consultation on the Environment

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) if she will list the names of attendees present at the consultation on the environment on 8 December; and in what capacity each attended; [206032]

(2) what conclusions were reached following the consultation on the environment on 8 December; and if she will make a statement. [206033]

Mr. Morley: Defra hosted a number of events on 8 December, in connection with the publication of Delivering the Essentials of Life, Defra's Five Year Strategy, and the launch of the consultation on the UK Climate Change Review. These events involved a number of stakeholders. Further events involving stakeholders will take place during the course of the consultation on the UK Climate Change Review.

Correspondence

Sir Michael Spicer: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she expects to reply to the letter from the hon. Member for West Worcestershire of 16 November, ref: 207829. [206163]

Alun Michael: I responded to the hon. Member on 21 December.

Countryside and Rights of Way Act

Mr. Letwin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the cost to date has been of implementing the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. [205392]

Alun Michael: Defra is funding the Countryside Agency, National Park Authorities and the Planning Inspectorate for the part each is playing in implementing Part I of the Act throughout the whole of England by the end of 2005. . The Countryside Agency has so far spent £37.59 million, consisting of £0.75 million in 1999–2000; £0.92 million in 2000–01; £5.17 million in 2001–02; £8.30 million in 2002–03; £13.25 million in 2003–04 and £9.2 million to date in 2004–05. The Agency expects to spend a further £5.8 million in the current financial year. National Park Authorities have been allocated an additional £4.725 million, consisting of £0.875 million in 2002–03; £2.0 million in 2003–04 and £1.85 million in 2004–05. We have also funded the Planning Inspectorate to deal with appeals against the inclusion of land on provisional maps and restriction appeals of £0.11 million in 2001–02; £0.84 million in 2002–03 and £1.20 million in 2003–04. The Planning Inspectorate expect to spend no more than £2 million in the current financial year. Local authorities have been funded to establish local access forums under Part V of the Act.

Further, the Government have announced funding of £2 million for 2004–05 towards an access management grant scheme to support local authorities in implementing the new right of access.

Decontamination and Radiation Service

Patrick Mercer: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has to introduce a decontamination and radiation service. [205587]

Mr. Morley: As I announced on 25 March 2004, the Government are actively considering setting up a decontamination and recovery service. A further announcement will be made as soon as is appropriate.

To date the priority has been to build on the wide range of experience and expertise which is already available in the UK, rather than to focus on the administrative task of setting up a new organisation. This has included assessment of and engagement with the existing capability and the identification of appropriate technologies.

Departmental Credit Cards

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many credit cards for official expenditure are held by her Department. [206445]

Alun Michael: There are two forms of credit card held by the Department. One is the Government Procurement Card which is a Visa purchasing card that operates in the same manner as a normal charge card. It is designed to streamline the purchase and payment processes associated with the purchasing of low value goods and services. The other is the Barclaycard Visa Corporate Card which is a Visa charge card. It has a monthly expenditure limit and an individual transaction limit. It is designed to support Defra staff by providing the vehicle for payment for business expenditure associated with their duties. The number of cards held for official business by Defra is as follows:

171 Government Procurement Cards

255 Corporate Credit Cards.

Departmental Properties

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many properties are held by the Department; what total floor space these properties provide; how many properties are vacant; and how much floor space vacant properties comprise. [206496]

Alun Michael: Defra currently holds 197 properties which have a total floor area of 336,763 square metres.

Seven of these properties are currently vacant, which have a floor area of 61,351 square metres. They comprise four former emergency food stores, one ex-laboratory site formally occupied by a Defra agency, a former HRI International site and a London site currently being refurbished.

Documents

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her Department's policy is in relation to the storage of documents and the use of shredders; and whether this policy has been reviewed in the past 12 months. [206751]

Alun Michael: The Department continues to implement well established policies and procedures for the review and disposal of files in accordance with its administrative needs and the Public Records Act. Defra has not introduced any new policies on the storage of documents or the use of shredders in the past 12 months.

E-mails

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her Department's policy is in relation to the storage and deletion of e-mails; and whether this policy has been reviewed in the past 12 months. [206750]

Alun Michael: E-mail messages that form part of the official record are saved for as long as business needs require and stored corporately in accordance with departmental record management procedures. Defra's guidance on e-mail management emphasises the importance of capturing all significant e-mail messages—this policy has not changed in the past year. Further email guidance is available on the National Archives website at: http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/electronicrecords/advice/pdf/managing_emails.pdf

Emissions Trading

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what representations she has received from the British ceramics industry on exemption from phase one of the EU emissions trading scheme. [206048]

Mr. Morley: The Government intend to make an application to the European Commission early in the new year for the temporary exclusion from the first phase of the EU emissions trading scheme of some installations that are parties to Climate Change Agreements. Operators of installations will be given the opportunity to decide whether they wish to be part of the application once they have been told of their allocation under the scheme. Officials have had regular discussions with representatives of industry, including the ceramics industry, about the Government's plans for an application for temporary exclusion.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what representations she has made to the European Commission on the UK's application for exemption from phase one of the EU emissions trading scheme. [206049]

Mr. Morley: The Government made an application to the European Commission earlier this year to temporarily exclude direct participants' installations that are included in the UK emissions trading scheme from the EU emissions trading scheme. This application has now been approved by the Commission. The Government intend to make a further application to the European Commission early in the new year for the temporary exclusion from the first phase of the EU scheme of some installations that are parties to Climate Change Agreements.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what action she plans to take to ensure the opt-out from the EU Emissions Trading Scheme for British companies applying to the climate change agreements are successful; and what measures she plans to take to ensure that British companies are not exposed to double regulation of *(a)* the UK climate change agreement and *(b)* the EU Emissions Trading Scheme in the event that the opt-out application fails. [205470]

Mr. Morley: The Government successfully negotiated an opt out provision in the Emissions Trading Directive. The Government intend to make an application, under this provision, to the European Commission early in the new year for the temporary exclusion from the first phase of the EU Emissions Trading Scheme of some installations that are parties to Climate Change Agreements. The application will set out the Government's case that CCAs, with minor modifications, meet the criteria for equivalence set out in the Directive. We have discussed an outline application with the Commission.

CCAs cover a wider range of emissions than does EU ETS, in particular indirect emissions through electricity use. Continued operation of the CCAs will therefore maintain the incentives to reduce these emissions, and continue to provide access to the reduced rate of Climate Change Levy for all energy use covered by the Agreements. The basic data required to report under both schemes is the same. The Government intend to consider the future policy mix of measures impacting on business as part of the review of the Climate Change Programme.

Engagements

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list her public engagements since 15 May. [200728]

Margaret Beckett: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 21 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1517W.

Environmental Action Fund

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs for what reasons the application from the Exhibition and Branding Parks County Trust was not considered for the Environmental Action Fund; and when a new application can be made. [206332]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 21 December 2004]:* An application was made to the Environmental Action Fund (EAF) by the Exhibition and Brandling Parks Community Trust for funding of a project under the new round of EAF grants from 2005 to 2008. The application was not accepted because it did not meet the conditions of the grant competition relating to the deadline for submission and to the completion of information. We have made no decisions about the scope and timing of future grant rounds, but do not currently have plans to launch another competition before 2007.

Environmental Services Association

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she last met representatives of the Environmental Services Association. [206807]

Mr. Morley: I met representatives of the Environmental Services Association on 2 February and on 20 May this year. Further meetings are tabled for 9 February and June 2005.

Erosion

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much and what percentage of the budget for 2005–06 for flood and coastal erosion will be spent on beach re-charge. [206664]

Mr. Morley: Total Central Government funding for management of flood and coastal erosion risk in 2005–06 will be £570 million. The flood and coastal defence operating authorities (Environment Agency, local authorities and internal drainage boards) will use most of this for operation and maintenance of existing risk management infrastructure and improvement projects. For coastal flood and erosion risk control the management of beaches through recharge and recycling of sand and shingle can be a very effective response. However, no sum is specifically set aside for beach re-charge projects though such work is likely to feature in a number of projects.

Ethnic Minorities

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the extent to which her Department's policies meet the needs of ethnic minorities. [205552]

Alun Michael: The Department's assessment of the impact of it's policies and services, including how these meet the needs of minority ethnic communities is set out in the Race Equality Scheme. This was published in July 2003, following a public consultation exercise. A copy of Defra's Race Equality Scheme will be placed in the Library of the House.

The Department is currently reviewing the Scheme, and Race Equality Impact Assessments will be undertaken as part of the review which will be reassessing policies to ensure they meet the needs of all our stakeholders. The Department is already taking part in a number of initiatives aimed at improving service to ethnic minority communities such as participating in Inter-Departmental Groups. Defra has a dedicated team within its Diversity Equality Unit that deal with all equality issues as they pertain to the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000, employment and training. The Diversity and Equality Unit work closely with Defra's Ethnic Minority staff network group consulting them on a regular basis. A Race Relations one day training event will be provided to all Defra's Directors in February 2005.

In addition the Department is taking action to address issues relating to the recruitment, retention and progression of ethnic minority staff.

Farm Grants (Pendle)

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list the principal grants available to farmers in Pendle; how many farmers were in receipt of such grants on the latest date for which figures are available; and what the average amount claimed in each category of grant was in the most recent year for which figures are available. [205009]

Alun Michael: Please see the following table detailing the payments to farmers in Pendle by scheme for the European Agriculture Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF) Accounting period 16 October 2003 to 15 October 2004. This details, for each scheme, the number of claimants, the total value of payments and the average value of payment.

Pendle constituency payments for EAGGF 2004: 16 October 2003 to 15 October 2004—Payment to vendors within Pendle constituency postcode listing

	Claimants	*Payment (£)*	*Average payment (£)*
Direct aid:			
Arable Area Payments	1	2,451.26	2,451.26
Beef Special Premium	60	141,204.56	2,353.41
Extensification Premium	55	112,382.59	2,043.32
Sheep Annual Premium	119	419,663.25	3,526.58
Slaughter Premium	107	112,435.06	1,050.79
Suckler Cow Premium	49	203,640.13	4,155.92
ERDP:			
Countryside Stewardship	21	78,009.24	3,714.73
Farm Woodland Premium	8	4,071.80	508.98
Hill Farming Allowance	107	262,065.03	2,449.21
Organic Farming	1	1,338.01	1,338.01
Rural Enterprise	3	46,614.36	15,538.12

Fisheries

Ms Atherton: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what monitoring she is undertaking in the offshore pair trawl fishery for sea bass. [203880]

Mr. Bradshaw: Under contract to Defra, the Sea Mammal Research Unit has placed observers on board UK vessels in the offshore pair trawl fishery. Results for this season's fishery which began in November are not yet available.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of proposals to change the *(a)* number, *(b)* operational framework, *(c)* basis of accountability, *(d)* funding regime and *(e)* legislative framework of Sea Fisheries Committees following her Department's receipt of the Bradley Report. [204192]

Mr. Bradshaw: There were around 130 responses to consultation on the Bradley report, which closed at the beginning of October. A significant number of respondents argued that the Bradley recommendations should be taken forward alongside those made by the

Strategy Unit in its report 'Net Benefits', which also made recommendations on the management of inshore fisheries. Many also emphasised the importance they placed on local and stakeholder input.

I agree with both these points, and have recently written to the Chairmen of Sea Fisheries Committees to advise them that I do not propose to make decisions about inshore management structures while a working group on which they are represented is considering the relevant Strategy Unit recommendations. Copies of the letters have been placed in the House Library.

One substantial issue raised by Bradley that was not covered by the Strategy Unit is the status and management of the Sea Fisheries Inspectorate, where I propose to move the SFI executive agency status next year.

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the estimated discards were in UK waters, in the last three years for which statistics are available, broken down by category of fish. [204220]

Mr. Bradshaw: UK fisheries laboratories send observers to sea to record the quantity of fish discarded and retained by fishing vessels. The following tables show estimates for the proportion of catch discarded of cod, haddock, and whiting by the Scottish fleet and a representative sample of the English fleet in the North Sea. These estimates are obtained by raising the observer data to the total number of recorded days-at-sea. The estimates update information given in response to a previous question from the hon. Member on 2 April 2003, *Official Report*, column 763W. The English figures for 2001 and 2002 have been adjusted from those given in the previous reply.

Percentage of catch discarded (by weight)

Species	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
England			
Cod	13	22	12
Haddock	39	9	19
Whiting	63	40	64
Scotland			
Cod	23	9	12
Haddock	75	46	37
Whiting	46	52	51

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what Total Allowable Catch permitted for waters within the United Kingdom's 200 mile or median line limit, broken down by fish type is; what the Total Allowable Catch is for UK vessels as a proportion of each; and if she will make a statement. [204221]

Mr. Bradshaw: There are over 200 fish stocks for which the EC Fisheries Council sets total allowable catches (TACs). Only one of those stocks, Clyde herring, is a stock that is exclusively within the United Kingdom's fisheries limits. The UK receives all of the total allowable catch set for this stock.

The other stocks that include waters within the United Kingdom's fisheries limits also include parts of other sea areas as well. For these stocks, no separate part of the Total Allowable Catch is related exclusively to the UK waters involved, and as such the question as asked cannot be answered.

Flooding

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much money has been spent on flood protection measures within the Greater London area in each of the last five years. [204739]

Mr. Morley: Defra has overall policy responsibility for flood and coastal erosion risk in England. My Department funds most of the Environment Agency's activities in this area and provides grant aid on a project by project basis to the other flood and coastal defence operating authorities (local authorities primarily) to support their investment in improvement works.

The Environment Agency is the principal authority responsible for management of flood risk. Its expenditure profile for London for operational, maintenance and capital works during the last five years is as follows:

	£ million
1999–2000	45
2000–01	42
2001–02	36
2002–03	35
2003–04	39

Defra has not provided grant aid for improvement projects to local authorities in Greater London in the last five years although they may have received some support for their own spend on flood risk management through the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's local government finance mechanism.

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent research she has commissioned on the incidence of flooding in Oxford; what the terms of reference were; and what the expected date for the *(a)* report and *(b)* publication is. [205884]

Mr. Morley: Defra has overall policy responsibility for flood and coastal erosion risk in England. The Department funds most of the Environment Agency's activities in this area and provides grant aid on a project by project basis to the other flood and coastal defence operating authorities (local authorities and internal drainage boards) to support their investment in improvement works.

The Environment Agency is the principal authority responsible for management of flood risk. I understand the Agency commissioned the 'Oxford Strategy Study' in February 2002. This reported in April 2004.

An important part of the 'terms of reference' identified that the Study should establish the best course of action to reduce the risk of flooding within the Oxford flood plain.

The six potential solutions identified by the Study are now being developed within the Agency's Oxford Scheme Feasibility Stage 1. This was commissioned in November 2004 and aims to be complete by March 2006. It will enable the Agency to establish and take forward the scheme which is most viable environmentally, economically and technically.

Foot and Mouth

Mr. Luff: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many farms in England have been subject to decontamination activity by her Department this year as a result of inappropriate burial of material associated with the 2001 foot and mouth epidemic; what the cost of such activity has been; and how many more farms she expects will be subject to similar activity. [205364]

Mr. Bradshaw: Two farms in England, both in Worcestershire, have been subject to the removal of agricultural waste or pyre ash this year as a result of FMD activities in 2001.

The Department has removed buried agricultural waste from one farm, and buried and unburied pyre ash plus a small quantity of scrap metal from another. Agricultural waste, which could not be adequately disinfected, was burned and/or buried on the affected premises during the 2001 FMD outbreak to prevent the risk of disease spread.

The total estimated costs of these operations in England are £355,000.

One additional farm in England is known to require similar activity. Further sites may be identified as a result of risk assessments and the precautionary monitoring programme.

Hydrometeorological Disaster

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what research her Department has carried out into hydrometeorological disaster. [206809]

Mr. Morley: Defra Flood management currently has a research project on Extreme Event Recognition as part of its joint funded programme with the Environment Agency. The purpose of the project is to improve advance identification of meteorological conditions with the potential to cause extreme flood conditions. An initial phase of the project was undertaken by Salford University in 2001–02 and carried out some initial analysis of historical events and defined the potential for areas of further research. A summary of the project is also available at http://sciencesearch.defra.gov.uk/Document.aspx?DocumentID=1849

Phase 2 of the research, a three-year programme from 2004 to 2006, is being carried out by a consortium involving the Met Office, Centre for Ecology and Hydrology and Salford university. The outcome of the work will feed into operational flood forecasting by the Environment Agency and other severe weather forecasting services provided by the Met Office.

Other research into wider meteorological conditions that may cause disasters is undertaken directly by the Met Office who are a Trading Fund of the Ministry of Defence.

IT (Disciplinary Procedures)

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many staff in her Department have *(a)* received official warnings and *(b)* faced disciplinary procedures following breaches of IT policy in each year since 1997. [205818]

Alun Michael: The Department does not maintain a central list of breaches of IT policy as these are generally handled through the line management chain. Therefore, there is no central record of warnings issued in cases where IT policy has been breached. Since Defra came into existence on 9 June 2001 six members of staff have faced disciplinary procedures for breaches of this policy.

The Department seeks to ensure that all users of computer systems are fully aware of their responsibilities and legal obligations. This is done by a variety of methods such as through system training programmes, published user guides and usage policies together with general security policy guidance and advice. This material is subject to regular review and is easily accessible through the Departmental Intranet. Regular Office Notices also provide reminders of key points.

Landfill

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairshow many tonnes of biodegradable municipal waste were diverted from landfill in *(a)* 2001–02 and *(b)* 2002–03. [206825]

Mr. Morley: The estimated quantities of biodegradable municipal waste diverted from landfill in England are as follows:

	Million tonne
2001–02	4.01
2002–03	4.56

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the total tonnage of biodegradable municipal waste that will need to be diverted in *(a)* 2010, *(b)* 2013 and *(c)* 2020 to comply with Article 5 of the Landfill Regulations. [206826]

Mr. Morley: The UK targets for the amount of biodegradable municipal waste that can be landfilled in the three target years, as set out in the Landfill (Scheme Year and Maximum Landfill Amount) Regulations 2004, are:

	Million tonne
2009–10	13.7
2012–13	9.13
2019–20	6.39

Therefore, the total cumulative reductions in the amount of biodegradable municipal waste going to landfill for the UK, from 2005–06, to meet each of the targets, are approximately:

	Million tonne
July 2010	5
July 2013	9.5
July 2020	11.5

Marine Conservation (North Sea)

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her policy is on the establishment of marine conservation zones in the North Sea. [205885]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Government are committed to establishing an ecologically coherent network of marine protected areas throughout UK waters, including the North Sea.

We are close to completing the UK's contribution to the Natura 2000 network under the Habitats and Birds Directives within Territorial Waters and are preparing regulations to extend the Habitats and Birds Directives to the offshore marine area.

Office of Water Services

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the salary of the *(a)* chair, *(b)* chief executive and *(c)* board members of the Office of Water Services is; and how many days' work per week each is expected to undertake. [207024]

Mr. Morley: The Office of Water Services does not have a chair, chief executive or statutory board. The Director General of Water Services is the statutory regulator. He is employed on a full time basis and assisted by a committee of full time senior managers and a non-statutory board, which includes four non-executive advisory directors, who work two days a month. The Director General's salary in 2003–04 was in the pay band £140–145,000. Salaries and benefits of other senior members of Ofwat are published in the Ofwat Resource Accounts 2003–04 (note 3 of the accounts) which is available in the Library of the House.

Ofwat Review (Water and Sewerage)

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) when it was decided to announce an inquiry into Ofwat's performance on its recommendations on price limits for water and sewerage for England and Wales; and if she will list representations she received on the matter; [204539]

(2) what criteria were used in the selection process of John Baker as the Chairman of the Ofwat review on its recommendations on price limits for water sewerage. [204549]

Mr. Morley: There will be no inquiry into Ofwat's conduct of the price review.

However, Ofwat indicated to the EFRA committee in October its intention to review the way in which it carried out its two-year review of price limits for the water and sewerage companies in England and Wales. The steering group conducting this review will be chaired by John Baker, a non-executive advisory director of Ofwat. The Director General of Water Services appointed the Chairman of this inquiry.

I have received no representations about Ofwat's review.

Press Officers

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many press officers are employed in the Department. [206519]

Alun Michael: As at 1 January 2005 there were 23 press officers in Defra's communications directorate. This number includes the posts of head of news and press secretary to the Secretary of State.

Road Transport (Emissions)

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the *(a)* reasons for and *(b)* consequences of rising emissions of (i) nitrogen dioxide and (ii) ammonia from the road transport sector between 1990 and 2002. [206026]

Mr. Morley: Most emissions of nitrogen oxides (nitrogen dioxide and nitric oxide) at the point of release are nitric oxide. Under normal circumstances the emitted nitrogen monoxide rapidly reacts to form nitrogen dioxide. The National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory (NAEI) does not report separately emissions of nitrogen dioxide and nitric oxide.

Emissions of nitrogen oxides from road transport decreased by 45 per cent. between 1990 and 2002 from 1,295 to 711 kte. This is mainly as a result of the increase in the proportion of the vehicle fleet fitted with catalysts and improvements in the emissions of nitrogen oxides from diesel fuelled vehicles.

The Air Quality Expert Group (AQEG) reported in 2004 that there may have been an increase in the proportion of nitrogen dioxide emitted directly from the tailpipe of diesel vehicles as a result of increased diesel activity and the fitting of specific types of particle matter traps. AQEG's report can be viewed at http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/airquality/ageg/nitrogen-dioxide/index.htm.

Emissions of ammonia from road transport were only 4.2 per cent. of the national ammonia emission total in 2002. They had increased between 1990 and 2002 from 0.85 to 11.97 kte. The increase in ammonia releases from road transport is related to the growth in the number of vehicles fitted with three- way catalysts. These produce ammonia and nitrous oxide as a by-product of the catalytic process that reduces emissions of nitrogen oxides. Improvements in catalyst technology and engine management systems has reduced ammonia emissions in recent years. The NAEI reports ammonia emissions from road transport peaked in 2000 and are now starting to fall as these new vehicles penetrate the fleet. The NAEI can be viewed at http://www.naei.org.uk.

Reduced emissions of nitrogen oxides from road transport reduces the ambient levels of nitrogen dioxide. This decreases the areas where air quality objectives are exceeded and reduces the detrimental health effects associated with high ambient levels of nitrogen dioxide. Increased primary emissions of nitrogen dioxide may have a significant impact on roadside nitrogen dioxide concentrations in areas where there is considerable diesel activity.

The consequences of the rise in emissions of ammonia from road transport are thought to be relatively slight. While there may, on occasion, be a detectable odour from some catalyst equipped cars. Emission of ammonia from road transport tend to occur mostly in urban locations, whereas the main ecological effects of ammonia occur to rural ecosystems.

Senior Women

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many women there are in senior positions in her Department. [205554]

Alun Michael: The Cabinet Office collects and publishes annually statistical information on the Civil Service by Department. These include data on the number of women in senior positions in Departments.

The latest available information at April 2004 is available in the Library and on the Civil Service website at: http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management information/statistical_information/statistics/publications/xls/disability_apr04_4nov04.xls

This shows that 40 women (25.1 per cent.) within the core Department were at Senior Civil Service level.

The website also holds historic data on this subject.

Sickness Absence

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many days sick leave were taken by civil servants in the Department in each year since 1997; and what the sickness absence rate was in each year. [204517]

Alun Michael: Defra did not come into existence until June 2001. The following table shows the total number of days sickness absence taken each year since 1997 in the first column, the second column shows the average rate of sickness absence (per staff year[1]) for each full year.

	Total sickness absence (days)	*Average days sick per staff year*
2003	60,465	8.3
2002	89,784	8.7

Defra is committed to managing sickness absence effectively. On 1 December the Department introduced a new sickness absence policy, which includes many of the recommendations contained in the report on Managing Sickness Absence in the Public Sector produced jointly by the Ministerial Task Force for Health Safety and Productivity and the Cabinet Office.

Examples

the introduction of welcome back discussions (return to work interviews) with line managers on each occasion of sickness absence;

the use of prompt points for the management of cases based on the number of days accrued.

Defra is also actively supporting the work of the task force by undertaking a trial of one of the seven approaches highlighted in the report to help address short term absence.

[1] Per staff year means individuals working part-time would be added to achieve the equivalent of a full-time worker.

Single Farm Payments

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what advice her Department has offered to farmers in respect of the operation of the single farm payment for those whose farms include *(a)* access to common land, *(b)* land which has been part of an agri-environmental scheme during the reference period, *(c)* land which during the reference period was in a different single farm payment regime than applied during the application period and *(d)* land which has been subject to a tenancy agreement for a period less than six years in length. [204577]

Alun Michael: Our aim is to ensure that all farmers are as well informed as possible about implementation of the Single Payment Scheme in England. Regular meetings have been held to consult farmers and their representatives in advance of our decisions on implementation. Once those decisions are made, they are communicated through News Releases, updates on the Department's website and, at regular intervals, consolidated in publications sent to all farmers in England. So far, these have included:

a letter sent in May, outlining the basic principles of the scheme;

a brochure with details of an announcement made in July;

a brochure with further details of announcements made in November;

The Cross Compliance Handbook for England (2005 Edition).

Further such communications are planned over the coming weeks. In addition, farmers can pose questions to the Defra helpline at any time.

On the issues specifically mentioned:

(a) Policy relating to this very complex area has only just been announced and we are in the process of adding to the content of the website.

(b) Advice on what to do in circumstances where land was in an agri-environment scheme during the reference period was sent to all existing subsidy claimants by the RPA in July and August as part of the application pack for the "hardship" provisions of the scheme. Further information on the precise effect on the reference amount for individuals has just been announced.

(c) Those who have ceased farming in a region where they have a right to a reference amount will not lose that benefit. We are currently discussing details with the Devolved Administrations of how a transfer will work and those details will be announced shortly.

(d) Those with tenancy agreements of less than six years can access the scheme in the same way as any other applicant. However there are three National Reserve categories where there is a requirement that leases must be of six or more years

> duration. We have announced that leases under the Agricultural Holdings 1986 Act will qualify even if their initial term is for less than six years.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether departmental special advisers have made appearances before parliamentary select committees in their official capacity since May 1997. [204307]

Alun Michael: No.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many special advisers there are in the Department, broken down by civil service pay grade. [206515]

Alun Michael: Details on the names and number of special advisers by pay band by department are published on annual basis. For information for the financial year 2003–04, I refer the hon. Member to the statement given by my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister, on 22 July 2004, *Official Report*, column 466W.

Information for 2004–05 will be published as soon as it is ready after the end of the current financial year.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on how many occasions between 31 March 2002 and 31 March 2003 her special advisers travelled abroad in an official capacity; what places were visited; and how much each visit cost. [207174]

Alun Michael: All travel by the special advisers has been undertaken in accordance with the guidelines set out in the Ministerial Code and the Civil Service Management Code. During this period the special advisers have visited, in an official capacity, the following places/countries at a cost of:

		£
10–15 April 2002	USA and Canada	6,062.30
3–8 June 2002	Indonesia	5,142.40
24–25 June 2002	Luxembourg	875.00
27 June 2002	Luxembourg	659.00
15 July 2002	Belgium	452.70
26 August-4 September 2002	South Africa	3,272.00
12 September 2002	Belgium	480.00
16–17 October 2002	Luxembourg	578.00
21–22 October 2002	France	450.00
26 October-2 November 2002	India	3,438.20
9–10 December 2002	Belgium	542.50
2–4 February 2003	USA	4,202.86
	Total	26,154.96

State Veterinary Service

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the review of the State Veterinary Service; when it will end; if she will publish all the evidence collated; and what format the review is taking. [206806]

Mr. Bradshaw: The review into the State Veterinary Service (SVS) was carried out at the end of 2003 and a full report produced earlier in 2004. The report was issued for public consultation in July. It recommended that SVS should become an Executive Agency on 1 April 2005 and that, subsequently, a number of smaller, related Inspectorates might be brought into the new Agency.

On 29 November I announced a decision to proceed with the plan to launch the new Agency subject to Ministers' agreement to the final proposals, which are being put together now. A Chief Executive (Designate) has been appointed and is in post.

Full details of the review, the consultation and the responses received are available on the Defra web site.

Stolen Property

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many civil servants from her Department have *(a)* faced disciplinary proceedings as a result of allegations of theft, *(b)* been charged with theft and *(c)* been dismissed following theft allegations in each year since 1997. [206406]

Alun Michael: As Defra did not come into existence until June 2001, I am only able to provide information from that date. The information relates to a total staff of nearly 7,000 and is as follows:

	Number of staff who faced disciplinary proceedings as a result of allegations of theft	*Number of staff charged with theft*	*Number of staff dismissed following theft allegations*
2001	0	0	0
2002	24	4	1
2003	0	0	3
2004	1	1	1

Note:

The dismissals in 2003 relate to cases started in 2002.

Tenancy Reform

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on her proposals for tenancy reform for agricultural holdings following the recent statement by the Parliamentary Under Secretary at Smithfield Show on the future of its Tenancy Reform Referendum Group. [206858]

Alun Michael: The Government are taking forward all of the recommendations of the Tenancy Reform Industry Group for amendment to the Agricultural Holdings Act 1986 and Agricultural Tenancies Act 1995. A consultation document on a draft Regulatory Reform Order on tenancy reform was issued at the end of September, which, if adopted, would implement the legislative changes recommended by the Group.

In co-operation with the Tenancy Reform Industry Group, the Government have also published a Code of Good Practice on agri-environment schemes and diversification within agricultural tenancies. The aim of the Code is to increase tenant farmer participation in agri-environment schemes and diversified activities by providing a framework for landlords and tenants to follow when considering these projects. Government are providing funding of £60,000 per year over four years for an adjudication scheme to back up the Code of Practice, where landlords and tenants are unable to reach agreement.

The Government have welcomed the valuable role the Tenancy Reform Industry Group has played in advising Government on tenancy issues. We intend to continue to use the experience and knowledge of the Group to steer through our programme of tenancy reform. The Group will also play a role in monitoring the effectiveness of the Code of Good Practice and the impact of the Single Payment on landlord/tenant relationships. There are no plans to disband the Group at present.

Turkey Manure

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the spread of odour from turkey manure. [203098]

Alun Michael: I refer the hon. Member to my earlier replies to her of 15 December 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1114–15W.

Waste

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the current budget is for the Waste Implementation Programme; how many people are employed by the Programme; and if she will list the achievements of the qualitative and quantative Programme. [206776]

Mr. Morley: Budget 2003 announced that, as part of the reform of the Landfill Tax Credit Scheme, approximately £84/92/92 million had been allocated to the new Waste Implementation Programme (WIP) in England for the financial years 2003–04, 2004–05 and 2005–06. Currently, 80 people are employed by WIP, of which 55 work for the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP), which is a key delivery agent for significant elements of the programme.

WIP has been very successful in prioritising close engagement with local authorities and the waste industry to create a stronger understanding of the opportunities and challenges that sustainable waste management presents, and to stimulate the development of essential expertise. Data from the latest Municipal Waste Management Survey show 14.5 per cent. of household waste was collected for recycling in 2002–03, up from 12.5 per cent. in 2001–02. Taking account of the growing contribution that WIP is making to improved performance by local authorities in meeting their statutory waste targets, the Government believes that the national 2003–04 target of 17 per cent. recycling or composting will now be met.

Specific achievements of the WIP programme include:

the allocation of over £100 million in challenge funding to local authorities, paving the way for new investment in recycling infrastructure, and approval of a number of major waste PFI projects capable of exceeding EU Landfill Directive targets;

the launch of a new £4 million programme of support for the voluntary and community waste sector, including help for the sector to develop meaningful partnerships with local government;

the successful launch of a pilot scheme for new sustainable waste management technologies for dealing with those wastes which are not readily reduced, reused or recycled (with industry partners to take forward the development of the first phase of pilot plants now clearly identified);

the award of £1.36 million worth of funding for research focused on new ways to divert biodegradable municipal waste from landfill under a Technologies Research and Innovation Fund, which is part of WIP's New Technologies programme;

publication of a new strategy for waste-related research, and the launch of a separate consultation on a 3-year strategy for better data on waste, to plug knowledge gaps across all waste streams;

provision of extra funding to local authorities for specialist consultancy support—worth approximately £3 million—to help in tackling specific local barriers to improved recycling performance. Nearly 300 authorities will receive support under this scheme;

the launch of a new national recycling campaign, aimed at raising public awareness about recycling and pushing England's recycling rate to a higher level. WIP is also supporting over 100 local authority campaigns being delivered this year and in 2005, which are focused directly on increasing participation in local recycling facilities;

ongoing delivery of a comprehensive and responsive programme of centrally co-ordinated support to local authorities that helps them to deliver their targets and other sustainable waste management objectives, including the launch of web-based advice and best practice guidance. Action at a local level is also being delivered through WRAP'S Recycling and Organics Technical Advisory Team, which provides a free advisory service to support English local authorities in the implementation and improvement of kerbside collection systems;

delivery of a targeted home composting programme with selected local authority partners;

the launch of a Waste Minimisation Innovation Fund, aimed at providing support for retailer-led innovation projects. The fund will provide resources (research, pilot programmes, professional services) for projects leading to a reduction in household food and packaging waste originating from the retail sector; and,

providing increased support for local authorities to deliver around £300 million worth of efficiency gains on waste services mainly by more effective joint working, promoting best practice, and standardisation of procurement operations.

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many tonnes of commercial and industrial waste were produced in *(a)* 1999–2000, *(b)* 2000–01, *(c)* 2001–02 and *(d)* 2002–03; and how much of this was recycled. [206779]

Mr. Morley: The last survey of industrial and commercial waste was 1998–99 so no data are available for years requested. The Environment Agency have undertaken another and results for 2002–03 will be available early in 2005.

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many tonnes of agricultural waste were produced in each of *(a)* 1999, *(b)* 2000, *(c)* 2001, *(d)* 2002 and *(e)* 2003. [206780]

Mr. Morley: On 9 December I announced that the Government had published for consultation the draft Waste Management (England and Wales) Regulations 2005, *Official Report*, column 106WS. One of the main purposes of the draft regulations is to repeal the current exclusion in section 75(7)*(c)* of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and to apply to agricultural waste the national controls that are already in place to comply with the Waste Framework Directive and the Landfill Directive. The consultation paper is available in the Library of the House and on my Department's website at http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/agwaste-regs/index.htm.

Because agricultural waste is currently excluded from waste management controls the data requested are not available. However, the consultation paper includes a Regulatory Impact Assessment which estimates agricultural waste arisings in England and Wales to be about 355,304 tonnes per annum; and provides the source of that estimate.

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many tonnes of construction and demolition waste were produced in *(a)* 1999–2000, *(b)* 2000–01, *(c)* 2001–02 and *(d)* 2002–03; and how much of this was recycled. [206781]

Mr. Morley: Information on construction and demolition waste is collected in an ODPM survey and published on the website at: http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/grouDS/odpm planning/documents/page/odpm plan 032244.pdf

The following table summarises results for the years in which the survey was conducted:

Estimates of use/disposal of construction, demolition and excavation waste in England, 1999–2003 (million tonnes)

	1999	*2001*	*2003*
Recycled through crushers/screens	24.4	43.3	44.4
Landfill	25.8	23.2	29.1
Spread on exempt sites	19.0	22.4	16.4
Total	69.2	88.9	90.9

Source:

Table 5.2 Survey of arisings and Use of Construction, Demolition and Excavation Waste as Aggregate in England in 2003, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what proportion of the household waste stream was hazardous in the last period for which figures are available; and how much of it was sent to landfill. [206789]

Mr. Morley: The household hazardous waste forum has estimated that hazardous waste comprises some 1 per cent. of the household waste stream. The most recent municipal waste management survey, which is available on the Defra website, records that 75 per cent. of municipal waste was sent to landfill in 2002–03 in England.

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the merits of extending producer responsibility to waste streams not currently covered by producer responsibility legislation. [206791]

Mr. Morley: Negotiations are underway with the Periodical Publishers Association for a voluntary producer responsibility (PR) agreement to increase the recycling of post-consumer magazines. This agreement will be similar to the voluntary agreements that the Department has already signed with the Newspaper Publishers Association and the Direct Marketing Association.

We also have it in mind to develop a producer responsibility agreement to increase the collection and recycling of non-packaging farm plastics once the current consultation is completed on the draft Waste Management (England and Wales) Regulations 2005 *Official Report*, column 106WS. The consultation paper is available in the Library of the House and on my Department's website at http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/aqwaste-regs/index.htm.

Chapter 8 of the consultation paper discusses the introduction of a voluntary or statutory producer responsibly scheme for the collection and recovery of non-packaging plastic waste from farms. Views are invited by 18 March 2005. Plastic packaging waste from farms and elsewhere is already the subject of the Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging Waste) Regulatons 1997 (as amended).

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what thresholds she has set for determining the amounts of different types of hazardous waste which may be present in the municipal waste stream while still allowing it to be classified as non-hazardous municipal waste. [206881]

Mr. Morley: Mixed municipal waste is classified on the European Waste Catalogue (EWC) under the code 20 03 01. This is a non-hazardous entry, and the use of thresholds does not apply. However, if the components of municipal waste are separately collected, some of these separately collected fractions will be classed as hazardous waste under chapter 20 01 of the EWC, and will be marked with an asterisk to distinguish them from the non-hazardous entries. The use of threshold concentrations for dangerous substances will be relevant to some of these waste streams. Further guidance is given in the Environment Agency's comprehensive guide to the classification of hazardous waste (WM2) available at http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/business/444217/590750/590821/502174/496498/?lang=e

Weed Killers

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what research she has conducted into the effects on *(a)* crops and *(b)* animals of using Roundup Biactive as a weed killer; and if she will make a statement. [206207]

Alun Michael: All pesticides, including Roundup Biactive, marketed in the United Kingdom must be approved before use. Approval is only granted provided comprehensive scientific data has been supplied and evaluated by the regulatory authority to ensure that there will be no adverse effects on crops or risks to non-target animals. These expert evaluations are scrutinised by the independent Advisory Committee on Pesticides before approval is granted by Ministers.

It is for companies to supply the necessary data to support approval. Government departments do not carry out separate investigations to evaluate applications. However, incidents involving the use of pesticides are investigated and if these investigations indicate a need to amend or revoke existing approvals then appropriate action will be taken.

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether local authorities have banned the use of Roundup Biactive; and if she will make a statement. [206208]

Alun Michael: Defra is not aware of any action taken to ban the use of Roundup Biactive. This is an approved pesticide product and its use is legal provided the conditions of use described on the label are followed.

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the complaints made by residents of St. Just in Cornwall about reactions to the use of Roundup Biactive; and if she will make a statement. [206209]

Alun Michael: Defra officials are not aware of any recent complaints made by St. Just residents. References have been found on non-governmental internet sites but these refer to complaints made in 1995. There is no indication that these complaints or any subsequent complaints were reported to enforcing agencies, or that they generated investigations at that time.

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what monitoring she carries out on the use of pesticides as weed killers by *(a)* Government agencies and *(b)* local government; and if she will make a statement. [206210]

Alun Michael: The Health and Safety Executive is responsible for monitoring the use of pesticides at work. Local authority Environmental Health Officers are responsible for matters regarding the use of pesticides in home/garden situations.

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on her Department's guidance on the use of materials containing Glyphosate. [206211]

Alun Michael: All pesticides, including those containing Glyphosate, are subject to the approval process. Approved products will have specific conditions for their use which are to be reproduced on the product label. For those pesticides used in farming, there is additional general guidance on safe practices contained within the statutory Code of Practice for the Safe Use of Pesticides on Farms and Holdings. Where pesticides are used in amenity areas general guidance is contained in the industry's voluntary Code of Practice for the Use of Approved Pesticides in Amenity and Industrial Areas.

Officials are currently working on a new statutory Code which will incorporate both of the above Codes. This is likely to be published in the summer of 2005.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Accountancy

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the Association of Accounting Technicians' position within the sector body, the Accountancy Occupational Standards Group. [206268]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Association of Accounting Technicians is one of four bodies that sponsor the Accountancy Occupational Standards Group. The other three are: the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants, the Chartered Institute of Public Finance Accountants, and the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much additional work has been required of course providers offering the Modern Apprenticeship in Accountancy and Payroll through the Association of Accounting Technicians since the introduction of the Technical Certificate requirement. [206270]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: This is a matter for the Learning and Skills Council. Mark Haysom, the council's chief executive, will write to the hon. Member with this information and a copy of his reply will be placed in the House Library.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much funding the Learning and Skills Council has given to centres providing Modern Apprenticeships in Accountancy and Payroll through the Association of Accounting Technicians; and how much centres received for this Modern Apprenticeships course in the year prior to it receiving proxy status for Technical Certificates. [206271]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: This is a matter for the Learning and Skills Council. Mark Haysom, the Council's Chief Executive, will write to the hon. Member with this information and a copy of his reply will be placed in the House Library.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will request the Adult Learning Inspectorate to inspect NVQ and Modern Apprenticeships courses in accountancy and book-keeping. [206272]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Adult Learning Inspectorate (the ALI) inspects all providers delivering work-based and adult learning funded by the Learning and Skills Council, including NVQs and Modern Apprenticeships in accountancy and book-keeping. The ALI also carries out a programme of thematic surveys/studies in agreement with the Department. In June 2004, the ALI published the results of a thematic survey of the area of learning covering business administration, management and professional, which includes specialist provision in accounts.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will examine mechanisms to ensure fair and open competition in the qualifications market in the fields of accounting and related occupations. [206548]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The qualification market is an open market with employers and individuals free to choose whichever qualification best meets their needs.

Before approving any qualifications as eligible for public funding, the Department takes advice from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA). Only qualifications that have met the QCA's published accreditation criteria are approved.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many guided learning hours are required to complete the Association of Accounting Technicians Book-keeping Certificate programme; and what representations she has received from course providers on how many hours are being offered. [206549]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Association of Accounting Technicians Book-keeping Certificate Level 2 (100/3075/X) has 120 guided learning hours.

My right hon. Friend has had no representations from course providers on how many hours are being offered.

Adoption

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps she is taking to assist potential parents in the process of adopting children; and if she will make a statement. [206052]

Margaret Hodge: As part of the Government's commitment to modernising the adoption service, a number of changes have been introduced to improve the service from the perspective of adoptive parents by making it fairer, more transparent and more consistent.

National adoption standards were issued in August 2001 to ensure that looked after children, birth families, prospective adopters and the general public understand what they can expect from the adoption service.

The Adoption Register for England and Wales, which has been fully operational in England since April 2002, has been established as a tool for helping to match children in need of adoption with approved adopters.

The Independent Review Mechanism came into operation on 30 April 2004 and gives a prospective adopter the right to apply to an independent body for a review of their case if his adoption agency does not propose to approve him as suitable to be an adoptive parent.

In line with commitments made during the passage of the Adoption and Children Act 2002, a new national framework for adoption support services was implemented in October 2003, to encourage more people to adopt looked after children by helping to ensure the support that adoptive families need is available.

As promised in the White Paper, "Adoption: a new approach", the Government undertook a fundamental review of the adopter assessment process and the operation of adoption panels. The review was informed by a Stakeholder Group of representatives from across the adoption field and the findings were the subject of a consultation document published on 8 October 2002. Based on the responses to the consultation, the debates when the 2002 Act was before Parliament and the responses to the more recent consultation on draft regulations and supporting guidance on the adopter assessment process and the operation of adoption panels, the Government intends to make important changes to the way that prospective adopters are assessed and approved when the 2002 Act is implemented in full. This will enshrine the Government's commitment to remove perceived blanket bans so that every application to be approved as an adoptive parent will be judged entirely on its merits. The process of assessment, preparation and approval will be clearly set out in regulations, statutory guidance and practice guidance to ensure greater consistency across England and improved transparency for prospective adopters about the process.

In addition, when the Adoption and Children Act 2002 is implemented in full next year, unmarried couples will, for the first time, be able to apply to adopt jointly.

Autism

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the applied behaviour analysis approach to educating children with autism. [207479]

Margaret Hodge: The Department has not made an assessment of applied behaviour analysis (ABA). The Department did publish a research report, compiled by the University of Birmingham, called "Educational Interventions for Children with Autism: A Literature Review of Recent and Current Research" in 1998. This found that almost all the interventions, including behavioural approaches, could point to evidence of success but that there was no well-founded evidence to show that any one approach was more effective than all the others nor which children on the autistic spectrum benefited most from which intervention. However, it did find that there were sufficiently positive findings across all studies of early intervention, including behavioural ones, to suggest that some form of early intervention is warranted.

The Code of Practice on Special Educational Needs (SEN) advises schools and local education authorities (LEAs) that children's needs should be assessed individually and that provision should address the particular needs of the individual child. The Department's "Good Practice Guidance" on autistic spectrum disorders lists ABA as one of the approaches that is available to schools and LEAs. The Inclusion Development Programme, announced as part of the Department's SEN strategy in February last year, will be looking at developing our evidence base about what works in educating children with ASDs, including evidence on ABA, and building a consensus about how to implement good practice most effectively.

Correspondence

Mr. Luff: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when she will reply to the letter to her of 11 November from Helen Donovan. [205949]

Derek Twigg: The Department has no record of receiving a letter from Mrs. Helen Donovan dated 11 November.

Departmental Credit Cards

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many credit cards for official expenditure are held by her Department. [206440]

Derek Twigg: In December 2004, the Department for Education and Skills had 253 purchasing cards in circulation.

Departmental Initiatives (Young People)

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 6 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 296W, on departmental initiatives (young people), if she will list the projects or initiatives which have been launched by her Department since 1997 which are no longer in operation. [206006]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 20 December 2004]*: Since its inception in 2001, the Department for Education and Skills has kept under review the support it provides for young people aged 13 to 19 with the aim of ensuring that that support meets young people's current and anticipated needs.

Within its current areas of responsibility there have been a number of projects and initiatives intended to help young people which have begun since 1997 and which have become part of our mainstream provision. Quality Protects, launched in 1998 by the Department of Health as part of the Government's wider strategy for tackling social exclusion, focused on children and young people looked after by councils, in the child protection system, and other children in need. The programme transferred to the Department for Education and Skills as part of the machinery of Government changes in 2003. The original provision of three years had already been extended to five years, with the programme being mainstreamed from 2004. The Young Runaways Development Project, for which the Children and Young People's Unit provided funding in 2002–03 and 2003–04, transferred to DfES and has now ended. Both programmes demonstrated effective ways of meeting the needs of children and young people which are enshrined in the Children Act 2004 and the Every Child Matters: Change for Children programme, launched on 1 December, and which have introduced, among other provision, a statutory duty to promote the education and wellbeing of looked after children, a statutory duty on organisations working with children and young people to safeguard them and promote their welfare, and children's trust arrangements to focus integrated, multi-disciplinary support on the needs of children and young people. Similarly, Active Citizens in Schools, an award scheme that empowers young people to get involved in projects that benefit the school and wider community, ran as a pilot project from Spring 2002 until September 2004, and is now being made available to schools nationally through a Framework and Toolkit funded by DfES. Schools can then adapt the scheme to fit their needs.

Other projects and initiatives have ended as they have been subsumed within other programmes: Connexions Summer Plus, which became part of the anti-crime Positive Activities for Young People programme; and New Start, which paved the way for Learning Gateway which evolved into Entry to Employment (E2E), the work-based programme for young people aged 16–18 not yet ready or able to enter an apprenticeship, sustained employment or further vocational learning opportunities.

Early Interventions/Family Resolutions Projects

Peter Bottomley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills for what reasons the Early Interventions project was changed to Family Resolutions; what the differences are between the two; and what the mechanisms for the change were. [203940]

Margaret Hodge: The Family Resolutions Pilot Project is designed to test the effectiveness of group work and information and parent planning measures in helping separating or separated parents reach agreement about contact and residence for their children, without needing formal family court proceedings. The Family Resolutions Pilot Project does not replace any other "Early Interventions project". However, its development has been informed by a set of early intervention proposals that were received by the Government in autumn 2003, which had been drawn up by an ad hoc group, chaired by a judge. The Government-led Steering Group, set up to take forward the development and delivery of a pilot project, chose the name of the project, in recognition of the focus of the intervention and the late stage in the separation of the parents at which it would take place.

The design of the Government's Family Resolutions Pilot Project drew on the experience of a range of similar approaches from other jurisdictions, in particular Florida, but also Scandinavia, California and Canada. However, the Florida early interventions approach differs from the Family Resolutions Pilot Project in that participation is compulsory in the Florida jurisdiction. Participation in the Family Resolutions Pilot Project could only have been made compulsory if there had first been a change in primary legislation. This would also have been necessary if we had wished to replicate the approach of other jurisdictions, in terms of any legal presumption of contact for parents and in terms of any expectation that parents must adhere to a prescribed pattern of contact, drawn from standard templates applied by the court.

Under the Children Act 1984 the welfare of the child is the court's paramount consideration when determining any question with respect to a child's upbringing. Case law decided under the Children Act 1989 has established that it is generally in a child's best interests to have contact with both of his parents but there is no statutory presumption of contact nor does the Children Act provide standard patterns of contact to be prescribed to parents by the court. The Parenting Plans, which we are currently revising, will provide a set of templates which seek to show in practice the sort of contact arrangements that work well for children of different ages and circumstances. These will be available at all points throughout the system—in solicitors' offices as well as through advice and mediation services. They will make clear, in practical terms, arrangements that are generally beneficial for children. They are intended to be used as practical aids, both by parents themselves as well as by solicitors, conciliators and mediators, to assist parents to reach reasonable agreements. They will seek to illustrate what the courts might well decide if the case went to a full hearing. The revised Plans will shortly be published in draft form and will be the subject of consultation. Once published in final form, they will be used in both in-court conciliation services and the Family Resolutions Pilot Project.

Education

Claire Ward: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the funding per *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary school pupil in Hertfordshire was in *(a)* 1995 and *(b)* 2004; and what the percentage change was. [207573]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: As a result of data changes and changes to the funding system, comparable figures are not available for 1995–96 and 1996–97. The following table shows per pupil figures in real terms for 1997–98 and 2004–05.

Total funding per primary and secondary pupil in real terms in 1997–98 and 2004–05 for Hertfordshire (£)

	1997–98	*2004–05*	*Percentage increase from 1997–98 to 2004–05*
Pupils aged 3–10	2,390	3,250	36
Pupils aged 11–15	3,260	4,100	26

Notes:

1. Price Base: Real terms at 2003–04 prices, based on GDP deflators as at 30 September 2004
2. Figures reflect relevant sub-blocks of education SSA/EFS settlements and exclude the pensions transfer to EPS.
3. Total funding also includes all revenue grants in DfES Departmental Expenditure Limits relevant to pupils aged 3–10 and 11–15 and exclude Education Maintenance Allowances (EMAs) and grants not allocated at LEA level.
4. The pupil numbers used to convert £ million figures to £ per pupil are those underlying the SSA/EFS settlement calculations plus PLASC 3-year-old maintained pupils and estimated 3 to 4-year-olds funded through state support in maintained and other educational institutions where these are not included in the SSA pupil numbers.
5. Rounding: Figures are rounded to the nearest £10.
6. Status: 2004–05 figures are provisional as some grants have not yet been finalised/audited.

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much funding has been made available to schools in Ribble Valley and Fulwood from the Special Education Needs Standard Fund since 2002. [205068]

Margaret Hodge: Standards Fund grants are allocated to local education authorities and devolved by them to schools. Lancashire county council received £1,865,070 in 2002–03 and £1,869,367 in 2003–04 through the Standards Fund grant for Special Educational Needs, including the local education authority contribution of 50 per cent. From 2004–05, the Special Educational Needs Grant became part of the School Development Grant, allocated to schools to use for any purpose to promote school improvement, including special educational needs. The notional amount allocated for special educational needs within Lancashire's School Development Grant is £1,944,142 in 2004–05.

In 2002–03 and 2003–04, LEAs were permitted to retain up to 50 per cent. of their Special Educational Needs grant to support central services. In 2004–05, LEAs are allowed to retain the same cash amount from their School Development Grant as they had in 2003–04.

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of residents in Ribble Valley and Fulwood have undertaken apprenticeships in each of the last seven years. [205069]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Figures for Ribble Valley and Fulwood cannot be provided as information at parliamentary constituency level is not available. The following table shows the number of starts on Apprenticeships in (i) the Lancashire Learning and Skills Council (LSC) area between April 2001 and the end of July 2004; and (ii) in the two Training and Enterprise Council (TEC) areas that amalgamated into Lancashire LSC—ELTEC and LAWTEC between April 1997 and March 2001. Figures are expressed in numbers rather then as percentages as population estimates are not available for TEC areas.

Time period[1]	*TEC/LSC*	*Advanced apprenticeship*	*Apprenticeship at level 2*
April 1997 to March 1998	ELTEC	1,200	—
	LAWTEC	1,800	—
April 1998 to March 1999	ELTEC	1,000	400
	LAWTEC	1,600	100
April 1999 to March 2000	ELTEC	800	1,100
	LAWTEC	1,900	1,800
April 2000 to March 2001	ELTEC	900	1,300
	LAWTEC	1,800	2,100
April 2001 to July 2002	Lancashire LSC	1,900	4,100
August 2002 to July 2003	Lancashire LSC	1,700	3,600
August 20003 to July 2004	Lancashire LSC	1,400	3,900

[1] TECs reported the figures in financial years. LSC reports figures in academic years. The first LSC 'year' was 16 months in order to bring the financial year figures into line with academic years.

Sources:

TEC Management Information

LSC Individualised Learner Record

Education Maintenance Allowance

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many students in the City of Newcastle upon Tyne had applied for an education maintenance allowance as at the end of October; how many had received a notice of entitlement; and how many had been granted. [204406]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: By the end of October 2004 the Assessment and Payment Body had received 1,555 application forms for EMA in the Newcastle upon Tyne LEA area. Of these, 973 were successful and were sent a Notice of Entitlement (NoE) and 849 young people had received a payment after enrolling on a further education course. Most of the unsuccessful applicants were unfortunately outside the age criteria which, during the first year of implementation of the national scheme, are different for a non-pilot LEA area such as Newcastle upon Tyne, compared to EMA pilot areas.

English as a Second Language

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what funding was made available to schools to teach children who have English as a second language in each year since 1997; and what funding will be made available in each year to 2004. [207553]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (EMAG), an element of the Standards Fund, provides additional support to schools to raise the educational achievement of minority ethnic pupils and to meet the particular needs of pupils whose first language is other than English. EMAG evolved from what was the education element of the Home Office Section 11 Grant which ceased on 31 March 1999. EMAG was introduced by the DfES (then DfEE) in April 1999. The figures for EMAG since April 1999, including local authority matched funding, are set out as follows:

	Total allocation (£)
1999–2000	139,274,586
2000–01	[1]147,241,292
2001–02	153,969,740
2002–03	155,878,916
2003–04	155,892,817
2004–05	162,128,507

[1] with the Traveller element removed

Note:

For 2000-01 only, the Traveller Achievement Grant was combined with EMAG. The total allocation of the Traveller element for 2000–01 was £15,700,527 and is not shown in this table.

Exeter University

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what discussions he has had with the Higher Education Funding Council about the proposed closure of undergraduate chemistry provision at Exeter University; [202619]

(2) what discussions he has had with the Higher Education Funding Council about the proposed closure of undergraduate chemistry provision at Exeter University. [202651]

Dr. Howells: I and the Secretary of State have discussed the implications of the Exeter announcement with the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). HEFCE is monitoring the situation closely.

Separately, I have asked HEFCE to advise me on higher education subjects or courses of national strategic importance, including science subjects, where intervention might be appropriate to strengthen or secure them. HEFCE will be entering into a strategic dialogue with universities, colleges, employers and other parties to consider this matter.

Freedom of Information

Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many staff in his Department have been employed to deal with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 issues in *(a)* 2001, *(b)* 2002, *(c)* 2003 and *(d)* 2004; and how many staff are budgeted to deal with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 issues in (i) 2005 and (ii) 2006. [205034]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Numbers of dedicated staff, as full-time equivalents, are as follows:

	Number
2001	1
2002	1.6
2003	2.6
2004	2.6

One official has worked full-time on the implementation of Freedom of Information throughout, and additional resources from related and specialist areas e.g. data protection, records and information management have been added as necessary and as the profile of Freedom of Information has increased. Beyond these staff who are directly involved in the ongoing implementation (and post January 2005 in providing advice and guidance to departmental staff), it is difficult to identify precisely the number of officials who will be dealing with Freedom of Information issues from 1 January 2005, since it is potentially part of every civil servant's role to respond to Freedom of Information requests. The current staffing will be kept under review during 2005 and 2006 to ensure adequate advice, guidance and compliance.

Green Paper on Young People

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when the Green Paper on young people will be published; and what the cause of the delays to publication have been. [205940]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 20 December 2004]*: The Youth Green Paper is due for publication in the new year. The paper will set out a comprehensive offer for young people covering three main areas: things to do and places to go; targeted support for young people at risk; and universal information and support for young people and their parents.

Homophobic Bullying

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what measures her Department is taking to counter homophobic bullying in schools and colleges; and what the budget is for such measures. [205939]

(2) what steps she is taking to prevent homophobic bullying in schools and colleges. [207477]

Derek Twigg: Homophobic bullying, as with any other form of bullying, cannot be tolerated and we must challenge homophobic language and attitudes wherever we find them and support our children and young people to do the same.

In November 2004, we organised the first ever National Anti-Bullying Week, in conjunction with the Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA), which had a strong emphasis on combating homophobic bullying. During the week, my predecessor attended the 5th birthday celebration of the Diana Princess of Wales Memorial Award for Young People, where he announced a new Diana Anti-Bullying Award, for which we have given funding of £50,000. At this event, he also launched new guidance for schools entitled "Stand Up for Us: Challenging Homophobia in Schools" which was prepared by the National Healthy Schools Standard with considerable input from the Department. Stand Up For Us sets out a practical approach for schools to quickly assess the scale of homophobic bullying they face. And it offers practical steps schools can take to create an environment where everyone can feel welcome and valued and where specific instances of bullying are identified, challenged and dealt with effectively.

During anti-bullying week, we also published "Homophobia, Sexual Orientation and Schools: a review and implications for action". This review, by the Thomas Coram Research Unit, looks at three areas: behaviour and bullying; teaching and learning about sexual orientation and relationships; and employment issues. It collates, summarises and assesses both peer reviewed research material, from this country and abroad, and less formal work conducted by bodies active in this area. It also reports the views of a wide range of organisations, 28 in all, with an interest in this area to paint a picture of how the issues are currently perceived. The report is available on the DfES website http://www.dfes.gov.uk/research and the findings will be used to inform future work in this area.

The Department's work in this critical area is ongoing and we are currently supporting Schools Out in promoting the first Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) History Month in February 2005, and have funded the development of a website which will raise awareness and encourage participation. It will suggest activities and events that schools, colleges, universities, libraries, museums, galleries, archives, and theatres can organise and offers teachers specific lesson plans and assembly suggestions to encourage and support schools in marking LGBT History Month. It will also provide an online notice board of events and link to current news relevant to LGBT History Month. See more at http://www.lgbthistorymonth.org.uk.

The Department has provided a further £600,000 to the Anti-Bullying Alliance to sustain the momentum for change. The Alliance will link with the work of the Department and join up with the key national strategies to work with schools and local education authorities to promote anti-bullying best practice across all schools, including countering homophobic bullying.

Increased Flexibility Programme

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what evaluation has been undertaken of the impact of the Increased Flexibility programme on *(a)* behaviour, *(b)* attendance and *(c)* post-16 participation. [207548]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The Department engaged the National Foundation for Educational Research to evaluate the Increased Flexibility programme. The report of the evaluation of the first year was published in February 2004 and the report of the evaluation of the second year is due to be published in January 2005. The evaluations have covered the experience of implementation and the impact on:

progress towards qualifications
social skills
employability skills
behaviour and attitudes
attendance
plans for progression
partnership working

A final report of the evaluation is due to be published in April 2005 and will include findings on post-16 participation of young people in the first cohort.

The evaluation has involved questionnaires and interviews with a sample from the first two cohorts of IFP students and their associated schools, colleges and training providers. Interviews have also been conducted with a small number of employers and representatives of HEIs.

Infant Schools

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many single form entry infant schools there were on 1 January 2004. [207554]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The information requested is not collected centrally.

International Students (Visas)

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment he has made of the cost of processing a visa extension application made by an international student studying at a UK university. [205312]

Mr. Browne: I have been asked to reply.

On 1 August 2003 the Home Office introduced charges for leave to remain applications, including those from international students. Fees were calculated to recover the full administrative costs (including staffing and overhead costs) of processing applications to the point of conveying a decision.

We have recently consulted stakeholders on proposals to extend the principle of cost recovery charging, to include the costs of providing an appeal function and the costs of delivering enforcement activity. The consultation closed on 8 December 2004.

A full analysis of responses will be undertaken following the consultation and published in January 2005. On the basis of the responses received and evidence gathered during the consultation period, a final decision on the proposals will be taken in early 2005. The fees will then be recalculated to reflect up to date budget and forecast information. Regulations will be laid before Parliament seeking approval for the final fees, which will take effect from 1 April 2005.

Lifelong Learning

Mr. Letwin: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the total cost is of the

Lifelong Learning Initiative; and what proportion has been spent on *(a)* intermediaries and *(b)* front-line service providers. [205396]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Total Government expenditure on lifelong learning, covering Further Education, skills and to develop the 14–19 phase, was around £9 billion in 2003–04. The latest forecast of administration expenditure for the Learning and Skills Council in 2003–04 is around £233 million. This represents a saving of around £50 million compared to the combined administration cost of the Training and Enterprise Councils and the Further Education Funding Council, before the setting up of the Learning and Skills Council.

Local Authority Plans

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the process is for amending a local education authority's *(a)* Education Development Plan and *(b)* School Organisation Plan; and whether approval to do so has to be sought from the Secretary of State. [207555]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The LEA amends the Education Development Plan (EDP) by carrying out an annual review, which is submitted to the Department in July each year. The Secretary of State does not approve the annual review.

There are no formal procedures for amending a School Organisation Plan (SOP), but an LEA must produce a new plan if there is a change in policy, strategy or local circumstances, relating to the organisation of schools, before the next plan is due. SOPs must be approved by the local School Organisation Committee (SOC) or the Schools Adjudicator if the SOC cannot reach a unanimous decision. The Secretary of State has no role in the approval process.

Planning requirements for children's services are being rationalised to help local authorities to operate more effectively in delivering outcomes for children and to reduce bureaucracy. The Children Act 2004 repeals requirements for the EDP and SOP, among requirements for other plans, and also provides for regulations requiring a Children's Services Authority (CSA) to produce a single plan for children's services—the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP).

Legislation is likely to commence as soon as possible to allow authorities to develop the CYPP. The EDP annual review will not therefore be required for July 2005.

Middlesbrough, South and Cleveland, East

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will set out, including statistical information relating as directly as possible to the constituency, the effect on Middlesbrough, South and Cleveland, East constituency of her Department's policies since 8 June 2001. [206837]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The Middlesbrough, South and Cleveland, East constituency lies within Middlesbrough local education authority. Available information by constituency, is provided within the Department's 'In Your Area' website available at http://www.dfes.gov.uk/inyourarea. Where information is not available at the constituency level it has been provided at local education authority level.

This website allows users to access key facts and local information about education and skills based on postcodes. The data available within the site offers comparisons between 1997 and the latest available year and covers five geographies. These are parliamentary constituency, ward, local authority district, local education authority, government office region. England figures are also provided.

The information available within the website is grouped in a number of broad categories including Literacy and Numeracy at age 11, Literacy and Numeracy at age 14, GCSE/GNVQ results, Pupils with Special Educational Needs, School Initiatives, School Workforce, School Funding and Resources, Children's Social Services, Early Years, Class Sizes, Post 16, Higher Education and Adult Education.

Additional information could be provided only at disproportionate cost. However, my Department is investigating ways in which we can disseminate more information about the effects of our policies at a local level. The 'In Your Area' website will be further developed over the coming months to include additional information about Adult Education, School Funding, School Initiatives, School Performance, School Workforce and Post 16.

Oratory School

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the impact on the School Admissions Code of the judgement made in favour of the Oratory School in the High Court. [207544]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: We are considering the judgment and what, if any, action to take in response.

Primary Schools

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what representations she has received concerning the impact of workforce reform on primary schools; [207560]

(2) what assessment she has made of the financial cost of introducing 10 per cent. planning preparation and assessment time in primary schools; [207561]

(3) what element of the increase in school funding for 2005–06 is to meet the school's requirement to provide 10 per cent. planning preparation and assessment time in primary schools. [207562]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: We have had some correspondence from the primary sector concerning the impact of workforce reform on schools. Last summer we worked with six LEAs and about a dozen schools in each of those LEAs to get a better understanding of their starting points, how they planned to deliver the reforms and to what extent that could be achieved through the redeployment of existing resources.

Based on that work, the minimum per-pupil funding guarantee for primary (and nursery) schools was set at 5 per cent. in 2005–06, 1 per cent. higher than for secondary and special schools, to take account of the need to provide teachers with guaranteed time for planning, preparation and assessment (PPA).

The precise cost at school level of introducing PPA time will depend on the strategies schools choose to implement the reforms.

School Sport

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the written ministerial statement on school sport of 14 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 122WS, how much of the two hours minimum of high quality PE and sport at school for children will occur *(a)* in curriculum time, *(b)* before school, *(c)* at lunch time, *(d)* at break time and *(e)* after school; and if she will make a statement. [207526]

Derek Twigg: It is for schools to determine the content and structure of their physical education and sports provision. This includes deciding on the mix and balance between what is delivered within and outside of the curriculum. Guidance published by the Department for Education and Skills and the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority recommends that 75 minutes per week is required to deliver the physical education programme of study at Key Stages 1 and 2 effectively, and 90 minutes per week at Key Stage 3. At Key Stage 4 the focus is on health, fitness and wellbeing. Our ambition, by 2010, is that all children will be offered at least four hours of sport every week. This will comprise at least two hours of high quality physical education and sport at school and at least a further two-three hours of sport beyond the school day (delivered by a range of school, community and club providers). The expectation is that by 2010 schools will be delivering the two hours of high quality PE and sport at school entirely within the curriculum.

Science Teaching

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps she is taking to increase the study of science subjects at *(a)* GCSE and *(b)* A-Level; and what incentives are offered to encourage the study of science subjects at university. [205543]

Dr. Howells *[holding answer 16 December 2004]*: Science is part of the National Curriculum at Key Stage 4 (GCSE). This means that all students are required to study it unless the subject has been disapplied to enable extended work related learning. In the Government's 10 Year Science and Innovation Investment Framework, we outlined how we would increase the number of young people studying science at A level by improving science teaching, making additional incentives available to get more top quality graduates to train to be science teachers. These include increasing the value of the teacher training bursary for science graduates from £6,000 to £7,000 from September 2005 and raising the 'Golden Hello' for new science teachers from £4,000 to £5,000 for trainees entering PGCE and equivalent courses from September 2005. It is generally for universities to decide whether to offer incentives for students to study particular subjects. In the 10 Year Science and Innovation Investment Framework, we said that the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) would provide support to universities, industry and scientific societies in their science outreach activities to schools and colleges.. From 2006–07, the Institute of Physics plans to introduce a means-tested bursary scheme for students who study physics at university.

Shared Parenting Cases

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether the Government supports maximum contact for non-resident parents in shared parenting cases. [201505]

Margaret Hodge: The Government believe that children benefit from a continuing relationship with both parents following divorce or separation, where it is safe to do so. The Children Act 1989 makes the welfare of the child concerned, rather than the rights of the parent, the paramount consideration for family courts when considering matters relating to the upbringing of children. The assumption that both parents have equal status and value as parents is enshrined in current statute and case law.

While the law is clear, we recognise that the current systems for resolving disputes need to be improved. Our Parental Separation Green Paper proposes a substantial range of measures which, we hope, will achieve major improvements to the system. These measures include:

> access to quality information and advice material, made available through solicitors, mediators, by telephone and on websites to help parents to arrive at agreed and practicable contact and residence arrangements in the interests of the child without recourse to the courts;
>
> a telephone helpline, providing general legal advice on the implications of relationship breakdown;
>
> the development of Parenting Plans—a set of templates which seek to show in practice the sort of contact arrangements that work well for children of different ages and circumstances. These will be available at all points throughout the system—in solicitors' offices as well as through advice and mediation services. They will make clear, in practical terms, arrangements that are generally beneficial for children. They are intended to be used as practical aids, both by parents themselves as well as by solicitors, conciliators and mediators, to assist parents to reach reasonable agreements. They will seek to illustrate what the courts might well decide if the case went to a full hearing;
>
> change family legal aid to promote conciliation in the interests of the child;
>
> through the relevant professional bodies, improve accreditation for solicitors providing advice on family matters concerning children;
>
> pilot the use of collaborative law where both parents' lawyers are committed to promoting settlements without going to court;
>
> provide greater encouragement for parents to participate in family mediation that can provide an alternative to court based resolution;
>
> promote in-court conciliation and mediation services throughout the courts;
>
> development a more intensive set of interventions for more difficult cases, which seek to shift the "behaviour" of parents who are in dispute through understanding that their child needs and benefits from a continuing relationship with both parents, through the Family Resolutions Pilot Project, currently being piloted in three areas. It uses a video, group discussions and parent planning sessions, spread across at least three separate sessions, undertaken under the direction and authority of the court, but seeking to avoid, as far as possible, a full formal court hearing;

> support CAFCASS to direct resources to out of court settlements and to help parents implement their agreements;
>
> improve case management by the courts, through the earlier listing of cases, with a rapid return to court where needed, with cases being considered throughout by the same judge; and
>
> provide courts with a more flexible range of levers to promote settlements and to enforce contact orders by, for example, referring parties to specialist parenting or community based programmes or through the awarding of financial compensation where the defaulting parent has caused loss to the other parent.

We are currently reviewing the responses to the consultation in the Green Paper.

Sixth Forms

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the impact on post-16 participation rates of the availability of school sixth forms. [207549]

Dr. Howells: The Department's five-year strategy includes the estimate that over the next five years some 100,000 additional places for 16–19 year olds will be needed. That means we will need more school and college sixth forms and more apprenticeships and other vocational opportunities, with providers collaborating and contributing their areas of expertise to a broad collective offer for all the young people in their locality.

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what discussions she has had with Learning and Skills Councils about the Department's support for school sixth forms. [207551]

Dr. Howells: The Department's five-year strategy sets out new measures to promote increased choice for 16–19 year olds including, where appropriate, increased choice of school sixth forms.

The measures include:

> competitions, administered by the LSC, for substantial new 16–19 provision, with a view to opening up the provider market;
>
> a new 16–19 capital fund, administered by the LSC, that will bring together school and college funding;
>
> a presumption that proposals from leading specialist schools to open sixth forms will be approved by the Schools Organisation Committee in areas where school sixth form provision is lacking or 16–19 participation or attainment is low.

Officials are working with the LSC to develop guidance that will help local partners implement these measures. The Department and the LSC plan to consult on the guidance in January with a view to issuing it in March, when we will place a copy in the House of Commons Library.

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the impact that a sixth form has on a school's performance at *(a)* Key Stage 3 and *(b)* Key Stage 4. [207552]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The provisional figures for 2004 for England indicate that 55.9 per cent. of 15-year-old pupils in maintained mainstream schools with sixth forms achieved five or more grades A*-C at GCSE and equivalent compared with 46.7 per cent. of those in schools without sixth forms.

The percentage of pupils in maintained mainstream schools with and without sixth-forms achieving level 5 or above in the National Curriculum Key Stage 3 assessment tests in English, mathematics and science in 2004 are as follows:

Percentage

	Schools with sixth forms	*Schools without sixth forms*
English	75	67
Mathematics	76	70
Science	70	62

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many school sixth forms have *(a)* opened and *(b)* closed since 1997. [207563]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Since 1997, in England:

> *(a)* 76 school sixth forms have opened and
>
> *(b)* 37 school sixth forms have closed.

Special Educational Needs

Mr. Byrne: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will list schools in England which have been *(a)* developed and *(b)* re-developed since 2001 to educate children (i) with and (ii) without special educational needs in a single environment, broken down by estimated capital value. [204189]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Capital funding is allocated directly to local authorities and schools, and is spent by local authorities in accordance with local management plans. No information is held centrally on schools that have been developed or re-developed.

Special Schools

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many pupils were educated in special schools in each local education authority in *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* 2004. [205626]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 20 December 2004]*: The information requested is shown in the following table.

Special schools[1]: Full-time equivalent number of pupils[2]—position in January each year: 1997 and 2004—by local education authority area

		FTE number of pupils	
		1997	*2004*
	England	96,720	90,650
	North East	6,420	5,800
841	Darlington	—	220
913	Durham[3]	1,160	—
840	Durham[4]	—	1,070
390	Gateshead	400	390
805	Hartlepool	230	150
806	Middlesbrough	510	420
391	Newcastle upon Tyne	840	580
392	North Tyneside	620	610
929	Northumberland	560	510
807	Redcar and Cleveland	220	220
393	South Tyneside	420	440
808	Stockton-on-Tees	560	500
394	Sunderland	880	710

Special schools[1]: Full-time equivalent number of pupils[2]—position in January each year: 1997 and 2004—by local education authority area

		FTE number of pupils	
		1997	*2004*
	North West	15,740	14,210
889	Blackburn with Darwen	—	330
890	Blackpool	—	290
350	Bolton	500	440
351	Bury	250	220
906	Cheshire[3]	1,780	—
875	Cheshire[4]	—	1,150
909	Cumbria	270	430
876	Halton	—	350
340	Knowsley	660	520
923	Lancashire[3]	3,040	—
888	Lancashire[4]	—	2,220
341	Liverpool	1,620	1,230
352	Manchester	1,430	1,210
353	Oldham	540	430
354	Rochdale	520	510
355	Salford	580	480
343	Sefton	520	450
342	St. Helens	470	360
356	Stockport	680	580
357	Tameside	470	380
358	Trafford	440	460
877	Warrington	—	360
359	Wigan	950	800
344	Wirral	1,020	1,020
	Yorkshire and the Humber	8,570	7,700
370	Barnsley	170	160
380	Bradford	890	890
381	Calderdale	230	250
371	Doncaster	930	630
811	East Riding of Yorkshire	430	400
920	Humberside	—	—
810	Kingston upon Hull, City of	480	390
382	Kirklees	690	700
383	Leeds	1,160	1,010
812	North East Lincolnshire	180	240
813	North Lincolnshire	180	190
927	North Yorkshire[3]	—	—
815	North Yorkshire[4]	700	690
372	Rotherham	670	690
373	Sheffield	860	810
384	Wakefield	660	420
816	York	360	240
	East Midlands	5,890	5,900
831	Derby	—	480
910	Derbyshire[3]	1,320	—
830	Derbyshire[4]	—	750
856	Leicester	—	770
924	Leicestershire[3]	1,210	—
855	Leicestershire[4]	—	530
925	Lincolnshire	1,130	1,180
928	Northamptonshire	990	1,000
892	Nottingham	—	370
930	Nottinghamshire[3]	1,240	—
891	Nottinghamshire[4]	—	810
857	Rutland	—	20
	West Midlands	12,560	12,130
330	Birmingham	3,060	3,040
331	Coventry	840	830
332	Dudley	700	650
918	Hereford and Worcester[3]	1,430	—
884	Herefordshire	—	180
333	Sandwell	800	450
932	Shropshire[3]	650	—
893	Shropshire[4]	—	280
334	Solihull	370	360
934	Staffordshire[3]	2,520	—
860	Staffordshire[4]	—	2,010
861	Stoke-on-Trent	—	510
894	Telford and Wrekin	—	440
335	Walsall	570	510
937	Warwickshire	1,090	980
336	Wolverhampton	540	640
885	Worcestershire	—	1,240
	East of England	9,260	8,880
902	Bedfordshire[3]	1,300	—
820	Bedfordshire[4]	—	960
905	Cambridgeshire[3]	1,240	—
873	Cambridgeshire[4]	—	830
915	Essex[3]	2,850	—
881	Essex[4]	—	1,870
919	Hertfordshire	2,110	2,160
821	Luton	—	250
926	Norfolk	940	910
874	Peterborough	—	350
882	Southend-on-Sea	—	470
935	Suffolk	810	840
883	Thurrock	—	240
	London	12,270	11,770
	Inner London	4,900	4,350
202	Camden	310	300
201	City of London	0	0
204	Hackney	470	350
205	Hammersmith and Fulham	330	270
309	Haringey	340	320
206	Islington	270	260
207	Kensington and Chelsea	60	70
208	Lambeth	620	520
209	Lewisham	530	520
316	Newham	100	70
210	Southwark	420	470
211	Tower Hamlets	510	350
212	Wandsworth	810	720
213	Westminster	120	140
	Outer London	7,370	7,410
301	Barking and Dagenham	180	210
302	Barnet	310	340
303	Bexley	320	420
304	Brent	440	420
305	Bromley	400	480
306	Croydon	510	560
307	Ealing	530	480
308	Enfield	480	460
203	Greenwich	740	440
310	Harrow	190	270
311	Havering	210	250
312	Hillingdon	620	620
313	Hounslow	400	410
314	Kingston upon Thames	230	250
315	Merton	260	240
317	Redbridge	410	440
318	Richmond upon Thames	160	140
319	Sutton	270	350
320	Waltham Forest	720	630
	South East	17,560	16,950
903	Berkshire[3]	1,870	—
867	Bracknell Forest	—	170
846	Brighton and Hove	—	810
904	Buckinghamshire[3]	1,730	—
825	Buckinghamshire[4]	—	1,060
914	East Sussex[3]	1,800	—
845	East Sussex[4]	—	1,080
917	Hampshire[1]	3,560	—
850	Hampshire[4]	—	2,400
921	Isle of Wight	360	280
922	Kent[3]	3,420	—
886	Kent[4]	—	3,030
887	Medway	—	460
826	Milton Keynes	—	560
931	Oxfordshire	1,000	930
851	Portsmouth	—	430
870	Reading	—	190
871	Slough	—	250
852	Southampton	—	350
936	Surrey	2,440	2,430
869	West Berkshire	—	550
938	West Sussex	1,390	1,460
868	Windsor and Maidenhead	—	190
872	Wokingham	—	310
	South West	8,450	7,300
800	Bath and North East Somerset	330	300
837	Bournemouth	—	210
801	Bristol, City of	870	680
908	Cornwall	360	450
911	Devon[3]	2,210	—
878	Devon[4]	—	970
912	Dorset[3]	1,150	—
835	Dorset[4]	—	550
916	Gloucestershire	1,350	990
420	Isles of Scilly	0	0
802	North Somerset	270	250
879	Plymouth	—	620
836	Poole	—	340
933	Somerset	680	470
803	South Gloucestershire	390	290
866	Swindon	—	390
880	Torbay	—	310
939	Wiltshire[3]	850	—
865	Wiltshire[4]	—	480

[1] Includes maintained and non-maintained special schools.

[2] Excludes dually registered pupils. For the purpose of calculating the full time equivalent of pupils, part-time pupils are counted as 0.5.

[3] Before local government reorganisation.

[4] After local government reorganisation.

Note:

Pupil numbers have been rounded to the nearest 10. There may be discrepancies between the sum of constituent items and totals as shown.

Source:

Annual Schools Census

Specialist Schools

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many applications the Department received in 2003 from schools in England for specialist status; and how many of these were successful. [206265]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: 787 secondary schools in England applied for specialist school status in 2003, and 484 of these were successful (61.5 per cent.). In the first applications round of 2004, 385 secondary schools applied and 284 (74 per cent.) were successful. 289 schools have applied in the most recent applications round. The results of this round will be announced in January. The total number of operational specialist schools is 1,955.

Statementing

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children were statemented in each year since 1997 in *(a)* England, *(b)* each region and *(c)* each local authority. [205053]

Margaret Hodge: Tables showing the number of statements of special educational needs (SEN) maintained by each local education authority and the number of children for whom a statement was made for the first time have been placed in the House of Commons Libraries.

Sure Start

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what entitlement schools in the Vale of York have to access Sure Start funding. [206544]

Margaret Hodge: The General Sure Start Grant includes all funds made available to local authorities from the Sure Start budget with the exception of those to support local Sure Start programmes. Local authorities are required to use General Sure Start Grant funds to meet specific objectives and targets set for them by the Sure Start Unit.

Although schools have no specific entitlement, it is open to local authorities to allocate Sure Start funds to local schools where they consider it meets objectives. Schools in the Vale of York could potentially have access to funding related to the development of extended schools (from 2005–06) and revenue grant funding for the provision of breakfast and out of school clubs.

Local authorities are also encouraged to develop children's centres for families with children aged 0–5 years on school sites and can allocate funds to schools to achieve that. However, such funding is only currently available in areas—unlike the Vale of York—which are considered to be disadvantaged.

In December 2004 the Government published "Choice for parents, the best start for children: a ten year strategy for childcare". That set out our vision for the future, whereby all families—in the Vale of York, as elsewhere—with children aged up to 14 and who need it will have an affordable, flexible, high quality child care place between the hours of eight and six, all year round. We have also said that we intend all schools to become extended schools over time and funding will be made available to all local authorities to support that.

Surplus School Places

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many times the working party on surplus school places has met since it was established in February 2004; and who its members are. [207545]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The working group on falling primary school rolls has met four times-in May, July, November and December 2004. The next meeting will be in January 2005. Key stakeholder organisations were invited to nominate representatives. Members and their organisations are listed in the following table. The working group is serviced by DfES officials and meetings are attended by Audit Commission officials whose work the group is overseeing.

Working group members

Kathryn James	National Association of Head Teachers
Lindsey Wharmby	Secondary Heads Association
Judith Bennett	National Governors Council
Hadrian Southern	National Association of Governors and Managers
Ian Elliott	Local Government Association—to November 2004 awaiting—replacement
Bryan Slater	Norfolk LEA
Brian Edwards	Northumberland LEA
Selina Timmins	Birmingham LEA
Ian Craig	Kent LEA

Working group members

David Whittington	Church of England Board of Education
Paul Briggs	Catholic Education Service
Robert Barr	Ofsted HMI LEA Division—to December 2004
Marianick Mellender-Gele	Ofsted HMI LEA Division—from January 2005
Jean Scott	Countryside Agency/DEFRA
Steve Sanderson	Primary Heads Reference Group—from January 2005

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many and what proportion of surplus *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary school places there are in each local education authority. [207546]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The following table shows the number of surplus school places and the surplus as a percentage of total places at primary and secondary level, broken down by local education authority. The figures state the position at the beginning of the calendar year 2003.

Number of surplus school places by LEA at January 2003

LEA name	*Primary*		*Secondary*	
	Number of places	*Surplus as a percentage of total places*	*Number of places*	*Surplus as a percentage of total places*
Barking and Dagenham	1,342	8	604	5
Barnet	2,520	10	960	4
Barnsley	1,175	6	805	6
Bath and NE Somerset	1,520	11	843	6
Bedfordshire	3,265	12	3,060	8
Bexley	1,779	8	812	4
Birmingham	7,162	7	2,998	4
Blackburn	1,048	7	795	8
Blackpool	719	6	335	4
Bolton	1,690	7	373	2
Bournemouth	1,182	10	490	5
Bracknell Forest	972	10	895	13
Bradford	7,150	14	2,992	8
Brent	2,950	13	1,185	7
Brighton and Hove	1,790	10	889	7
Bristol	3,880	13	2,039	11
Bromley	1,559	6	480	2
Buckinghamshire	4,332	10	1,257	4
Bury	1,102	7	253	2
Calderdale	1,891	10	497	3
Cambridgeshire	5,819	12	3,236	9
Camden	1,077	10	84	1
Cheshire	7,505	12	2,837	6
Cornwall	4,154	10	1,376	4
Corporation of London	6	3	0	0
Coventry	2,935	10	1,542	7
Croydon	2,414	8	1,923	10
Cumbria	3,450	8	4,207	11
Darlington	849	9	548	8
Derby City of	2,356	10	755	5
Derbyshire	6,504	10	3,117	6
Devon	5,291	9	1,523	4
Doncaster	3,152	14	1,712	7
Dorset	3,185	11	1,731	5
Dudley	2,687	9	595	3
Durham	8,552	18	4,079	11
Ealing	2,523	10	666	4
East Riding of Yorkshire	2,606	9	1,011	4
East Sussex	[illegible],791	7	1,670	6
Enfield	995	4	2,326	10
Essex	13,462	11	6,003	6
Gateshead	2,710	15	972	8
Gloucestershire	4,794	10	2,737	6
Greenwich	2,289	11	1,905	12
Hackney	1,947	117	931	11
Halton	1,258	11	383	4
Hammersmith and Fulham	1,254	13	1,369	18
Hampshire	10,414	10	5,001	7
Haringey	1,616	8	698	6
Harrow	2,832	13	283	3
Hartlepool	837	9	629	9
Havering	1,155	6	974	6
Herefordshire	1,421	10	495	5
Hertfordshire	13,231	13	9,832	11
Hillingdon	2,528	11	1,133	6
Hounslow	2,174	11	441	3
Isle of Wight	1,012	12	1,543	11
Isles of Scilly	265	0	0	0
Islington	1,760	12	589	7
Kensington and Chelsea	617	9	202	5
Kent	9,455	8	6,915	7
Kingston upon Hull City of	3,913	15	1,070	6
Kingston upon Thames	768	7	619	7
Kirklees	3,948	11	2,989	10
Knowsley	3,595	20	1,768	15
Lambeth	1,826	9	762	10
Lancashire	12,466	12	4,816	6
Leeds	8,487	13	3,647	7
Leicester City	4,120	14	744	4
Leicestershire	5,629	10	1,816	4
Lewisham	2,343	11	711	6
Lincolnshire	6,844	11	3,533	7
Liverpool	5,906	14	2,286	6
Luton	1,756	9	344	3
Manchester	5,690	14	1,614	6
Medway Towns	2,574	10	1,649	8
Merton	2,836	19	870	9
Middlesbrough	2,245	15	797	10
Milton Keynes	3,266	13	1,542	11
Newcastle upon Tyne	2,280	11	1,427	7
Newham	1,729	6	1,326	7
Norfolk	8,197	11	2,939	6
North East Lincolnshire	1,865	12	931	7
North Lincolnshire	1,101	8	1,167	10
North Somerset	782	5	250	2
North Tyneside	2,726	15	826	6
North Yorkshire	6,229	12	3,417	8
Northamptonshire	5,847	10	4,598	8
Northumberland	2,550	13	2,465	8
Nottingham City of	3,940	15	1,540	10
Nottinghamshire	6,121	9	3,670	7
Oldham	2,332	10	888	5
Oxfordshire	6,813	14	2,341	6
Peterborough	2,756	15	1,898	13
Plymouth City of	3,017	13	863	5
Poole	726	6	205	2
Portsmouth	2,384	14	802	7
Reading	1,751	16	854	12
Redbridge	1,091	5	1,245	6
Redcar and Cleveland	1,762	13	1,204	11
Richmond upon Thames	732	6	359	5
Rochdale	2,818	13	1,224	8
Rotherham	1,988	8	1,312	6
Rutland	608	19	345	13
Salford	3,097	14	2,154	15
Sandwell	4,096	13	1,917	9
Sefton	3,344	13	874	4
Sheffield	4,587	10	700	2
Shropshire	3,787	15	573	3
Slough	1,564	13	309	4
Solihull	1,162	6	164	1
Somerset	4,936	12	2,550	7
South Gloucestershire	2,942	11	1,462	8
South Tyneside	1,853	13	1,461	12
Southampton	1,776	10	1,478	11
Southend	723	5	638	5
Southwark	2,737	11	686	6
St. Helens	1,402	9	298	2
Staffordshire	8,256	11	2,602	4
Stockport	2,302	9	794	5
Stockton on Tees	1,947	11	839	6
Stoke on Trent	3,663	16	487	3
Suffolk	5,688	11	4,957	8
Sunderland	3,844	14	2,146	10

Number of surplus school places by LEA at January 2003

	Primary		Secondary	
LEA name	*Number of places*	*Surplus as a percentage of total places*	*Number of places*	*Surplus as a percentage of total places*
Surrey	8,501	10	3,706	6
Sutton	915	6	598	4
Swindon	2,146	11	877	7
Tameside	1,824	9	808	5
Telford and the Wrekin	1,542	10	854	8
Thurrock	2,271	15	760	9
Torbay	807	8	145	2
Tower Hamlets	2,013	9	1,424	9
Trafford	1,187	6	993	6
Wakefield	3,846	12	614	3
Walsall	3,334	12	998	4
Waltham Forest	1,272	6	980	7
Wandsworth	2,025	12	679	6
Warrington	1,857	10	395	3
Warwickshire	4,263	10	2,652	7
West Berkshire	1,328	10	330	3
West Sussex	7,348	11	3,804	8
Westminster	1,122	11	840	9
Wigan	2,676	9	1,441	7
Wiltshire	6,877	16	3,974	12
Windsor and Maidenhead	670	8	524	5
Wirral	3,735	13	1,472	6
Wokingham	1,304	10	316	3
Wolverhampton	3,436	14	1,713	9
Worcestershire	4,616	11	2,589	6
York	2,455	16	608	6
Total	482,078	11	231,391	7

Teachers

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what the gender ratio of registered teachers in maintained *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools is, broken down into age categories of (i) less than 24, (ii) 25 to 34, (iii) 35 to 44, (iv) 45 to 54 and (v) greater than 55 years; [205377]

(2) how many and what percentage of teachers employed in maintained schools were aged *(a)* under 24, *(b)* 25 to 34, *(c)* 35 to 44, *(d)* 45 to 54 and *(e)* over 55 years on the latest date for which figures are available. [205386]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The data requested are shown in the following table. The table shows full-time teachers in service in March 2003[1], the most recent date for which data are available.

[1] Provisional figures.

All schools: full-time regular qualified teachers[1]

	Nursery and primary				Secondary				Total	
	Percentage		Ratio		Percentage		Ratio			
Aged	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Number (thousands)*	*Percentage*
Less than 24	8	92	1	11.5	27	73	1	2.6	17.5	5
25 to 34	14	86	1	6.4	38	62	1	1.7	101.8	28
35 to 44	19	81	1	4.3	48	52	1	1.1	76.7	21
45 to 54	16	84	1	5.2	48	52	1	1.1	132.4	36
Greater than 55	18	82	1	4.5	52	48	1	0.9	36.8	10

[1] Includes heads, deputy heads, assistant heads, classroom, AST, post threshold and grade unknown.

Source:
Database of Teacher Records

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of the teacher workforce he expects will retire in each of the next 10 years. [205385]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The information is not available in the form requested.

In the Teacher Supply Model—used to inform decisions on the number of places to make available in Initial Teacher Training—we take into account teachers leaving the profession through both general wastage and retirement. If we consider total wastage (including any form of retirement) of teachers aged 50 and over, as a percentage of the teacher workforce in maintained nursery, primary and secondary schools, then—under the central scenario modelled—this rate rises from 3.7 per cent. in 2002–03 to 5.0 per cent. in 2007–08, and then falls slightly to around 4 per cent. in 2012–13. It should be noted that these figures become progressively more uncertain the further ahead they are modelled. The modelling assumptions are reviewed annually.

Proposed changes to the Teachers' Pension Scheme that will apply to all scheme members by 2013 are aimed at giving teachers much more choice and flexibility about the ways in which they manage the transition from work to retirement. We expect that teachers will welcome a more flexible approach that will enable them to move more gradually from work to retirement than is possible under current arrangements.

Truancy

Mr. McLoughlin: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children in *(a)* West Derbyshire constituency and *(b)* Derbyshire played truant from school in each of the last five years. [207490]

Derek Twigg: The information requested is as follows:

West Derbyshire constituency

Academic year (September-May)	*Compulsory school age*	*Number of pupils that missed at least a half day due to unauthorised absence*	*Average sessions missed per pupil due to unauthorised absence*	*Percentage of half days missed due to unauthorised absence*	*Attendance (Percentage)*
Primary					
2004	6,545	662	6	0.2	95.6
2003	6,577	755	6	0.2	95.4
2002	6,346	724	6	0.2	95.3
2001	6,530	475	7	0.2	95.4
2000	6,604	398	6	0.1	95.6
Secondary					
2004	6,388	675	17	0.6	93.7
2003	6,340	659	18	0.6	93.5
2002	6,157	509	23	0.6	92.0
2001	6,047	575	22	0.7	92.3
2000	6,074	492	20	0.5	93.0

Derbyshire

Academic Year (September-May)	*Compulsory school age*	*Number of pupils that missed at least a half day due to unauthorised absence*	*Average sessions missed per pupil due to unauthorised absence*	*Percentage of half days missed due to unauthorised absence*	*Attendance (Percentage)*
Primary					
2004	54,232	9,119	7	0.4	94.7
2003	55,418	9,759	7	0.4	94.4
2002	56,163	10,286	7	0.4	94.5
2001	56,883	8,603	8	0.4	94.6
2000	57,366	6,399	8	0.3	94.9
Secondary					
2004	46,178	9,876	14	1.0	92.2
2003	45,344	9,327	14	1.0	92.0
2002	44,151	7,348	17	1.0	91.6
2001	43,442	8,003	17	1.0	91.4
2000	42,602	7,319	17	0.9	92.1

Young Families (Funding)

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how much expenditure has been allocated to families with children aged 0 to five years in each year from 1997 to 2008; [199715]

(2) when she will reply to the question from the right hon. Member for Birkenhead tabled on 25 November, reference 199715. [206300]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 29 November 2004]*: Details of the annual expenditure since 1997 on Sure Start, childcare and nursery education are published in Table 2.2 of the annual Department for Education and Skills' Departmental Report, as follows. To reflect the increasing integration of services for young children and families, from 2003–04 funding for childcare and nursery education was merged into Sure Start.

£ million

Financial year	*Sure start*	*Childcare*	*Nursery education*	*Total*
1997–98	n/a	4	637	641
1998–99	n/a	45	134	179
1999–2000	7	56	150	213
2000–01	56	65	247	368
2001–02	134	109	224	467
2002–03	216	158	306	680
2003–04	745	—	—	745

Note:

The scale of spending identified in 1997–98 was due to a major injection of Nursery Education Grant funding to support the establishment of substantial free provision in the private and voluntary sectors.

In addition, from April 2003 all financial support for the delivery of free nursery education was consolidated within the under fives sub-block of each local authority's Education Formula Spending Share (EFSS)—the main source of education funding. Prior to that, provision in the private, voluntary and independent sectors and new places in the maintained sector, were funded through a separate, ring-fenced, nursery education grant, while existing places in the maintained sector were funded through the Standard Spending Assessments (SSAs). Support for free nursery education since 1997 as part of SSA and EFSS was as follows:

Financial year	*£ million*
1997–98	562
1998–99	1,170
1999–2000	1,280
2000–01	1,340
2001–02	1,490
2002–03	1,620
2003–04	2,600

Following the substantially increased support announced in the Spending Review 2004 and the pre-Budget report 2004, allocations for the Sure Start operational budget for the current financial year, and the next Spending Review period, are as follows:

Financial year	*£ million*
2004–05	866
2005–06	1,144
2006–07	1,671
2007–08	1,784

As a result, Sure Start resources will more than double over the four year period, a rise in average annual real terms of 24 per cent.

The allocation includes extensive support to local authorities to help establish our network of children's centres, delivering a wide range of early learning, childcare, health and family support. There will be 2,500 centres by 2008, and 3,500, one in every community, by 2010.

These totals take no account of the significant increases in Government funding on child benefit, parental leave and tax credit support, all of which support families with children.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Community Housing Task Force

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many *(a)* large scale voluntary transfers and *(b)* arm's length management organisation transfers the community housing task force has worked on. [207030]

Keith Hill: To date the community housing task force has worked on 127 large scale voluntary transfer schemes and 51 arms length management organisation schemes.

Compensation Claims

Tom Brake: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many claims for compensation due to injury from slips, trips or falls on council property or property maintained by the local authority have been lodged against each London local authority in each of the past two years; and how much money each London local authority paid out in compensation relating to injury from slips, trips or falls on council property or property maintained by the local authority in each of those years. [207057]

Mr. Raynsford: The information requested is not held centrally, and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Conferences

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many conferences were *(a)* attended by officials from his Office, *(b)* cancelled by and *(c)* facilitated by his Office in each year since 1997; and what the (i) cost to his Office and (ii) location was in each case. [205758]

Yvette Cooper: The information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Council House Sales

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the total income in capital receipts was from the sale of council housing under the right to buy in 2003–04, broken down by Government Office region. [204928]

Mr. Raynsford: Figures for the estimated right-to-buy receipts (based on the selling price less discount) for 2003–04 by Government Office region are tabled as follows.

	Right-to-buy receipts (£ million)
North East	189.7
North West	271.7
Yorkshire and Humber	298.5
East Midlands	234.0
West Midlands	279.8
East	264.8
London	1,060.9
South East	297.4
South West	128.0
England	3,024.8

Council Tax

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) what the level of council tax receipts collected in each local authority was in each year since 1997, broken down by billing authority; and what the forecast receipts are for the next year; [205256]

(2) what the projected level of council tax receipts in England is for 2004–05; and whether this includes the adjustment for council tax benefit. [205255]

Mr. Raynsford: The figures requested for the financial years 1996–97 to 2003–04 are available in the Library of the House. They exclude amounts funded by council tax benefit.

Comparable figures for the amounts of council tax collected in 2004–05 will not be collected from local authorities until after the end of the financial year.

Although the budgeted council tax requirement for 2004–05 (after capping) excluding budgeted expenditure on council tax benefit is known to be £17.552 billion, the amounts that will have been received during 2004–05 will also depend upon changes in the tax base during the year, the in-year collection rates achieved, and the amounts collected in respect of earlier years.

Mrs. Anne Campbell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the percentage change in council tax imposed by Cambridge city council has been in each year since its inception. [206980]

Mr. Raynsford: The information requested is tabled as follows. The table also includes the council tax figures used in calculating each year's percentage increase.

Financial year	*Own band D council tax (2 adults) (£)*	*Percentage increase in own band D council tax*
1993–94	136.13	—
1994–95	99.70	-26.8
1995–96	110.00	10.3
1996–97	112.33	2.1
1997–98	112.33	0.0
1998–99	115.14	2.5
1999–2000	115.14	0.0
2000–01	115.14	0.0
2001–02	114.00	-1.0
2002–03	116.62	2.3
2003–04	126.59	8.5
2004–05	131.65	4.0

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) how many pensioners' households he estimates will be affected by council tax reappraisal; and if he will make a statement; [207146]

(2) how many households identified as living below the official poverty line he estimates will be affected by council tax reappraisal; and if he will make a statement; [207147]

(3) when his Department will announce band levels for council tax revaluations; and if he will make a statement; [207149]

(4) what his Department's estimate is of the number of households in each council tax band that will move up in band grading following revaluation; [207150]

(5) what his Department's estimate is of the number of pensioners whose council tax band rating will move up following revaluation; what discussions he has held with the Chancellor of the Exchequer regarding subsidies for such households; and if he will make a statement; [207166]

(6) if he will make a statement on the criteria for selecting which households will fall within which band under council tax revaluation. [207170]

(7) what his Department's estimate is of the number of Band A households which will be rebanded under the revaluation procedures for council tax. [207278]

Mr. Raynsford: The distribution of dwellings to bands after revaluation will depend on property values as at 1 April 2005 and on decisions yet to be taken on the number and values of council tax bands. The report of the independent inquiry into local government funding by Sir Michael Lyons will inform the Government's decisions on council tax bands. This report is due to be submitted by the end of this year to my right hon. Friends the Deputy Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The Government have already made clear that the revaluation should not lead to a change in the overall council tax yield. There will be a transitional relief scheme to help taxpayers whose properties move to a higher band. Council tax benefit will continue to be available to help those on low incomes with their council tax payments.

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many households there are in each council tax band; what his Department's estimate is of how many will fall into each band after revaluation; and if he will make a statement. [207148]

Mr. Raynsford: The latest information on the estimated number of households in each council tax band in England is as follows:

	Number of households (thousand) (2003–04)
Band A (up to £40,000 at 1 April 1991 values)	4,494
Band B (over £40,000 and up to £52,000)	3,704
Band C (over £52,000 and up to £68,000)	4,152
Band D (over £68,000 and up to £88,000)	4,351
Band E (over £88,000 and up to £120,000)	1,899
Band F (over £120,000 and up to £160,000)	1,061
Band G (over £160,000 and up to £320,000)	766
Band H (over £320,000)	165

Source:

ODPM Survey of English Housing

The distribution of dwellings to bands after revaluation will depend on property values as at 1 April 2005 and on decisions yet to be taken on the number and values of council tax bands. The report of the independent inquiry into local government funding by Sir Michael Lyons which is due by the end of this year will inform the Government's decisions on council tax bands.

Departmental Equipment

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many items of electrical equipment were used by his Department in the last year for which figures are available, broken down by *(a)* cost and *(b)* number of each type of item. [205737]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not retain the information requested centrally, and could provide it only at disproportionate cost.

All expenditure incurred by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in the purchase and procurement of services and items is made in accordance with the departmental guidance on financial procedures and propriety, based on principles set out in Government Accounting. Where possible it purchases electrical equipment through centrally negotiated contracts.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the total external spending by his Department was on private finance initiative (PFI) consultants in each of the last two years; how many full-time equivalent consultants were employed over this period; how many billed consultancy days there were per year; what the implied average cost of each PFI consultant was; how many consultancy firms were used by his Department over this period; and if he will make a statement. [202459]

Phil Hope: The total external spending by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister on Private Finance Initiative consultants was £260,274.04 in 2003 and £44,281.00 in 2004. Seven consultancy firms were used by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister over this period.

The additional information requested is not held centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate costs.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much has been spent by his Department on *(a)* new furniture and *(b)* hired furniture in each year since 1997. [205618]

Yvette Cooper: The information requested is not held centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

All expenditure incurred by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in the purchase and procurement of services and items is made in accordance with the departmental guidance on financial procedures and propriety, based on principles set out in Government Accounting. Where possible the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister purchases furniture through centrally negotiated contracts, always ensuring that the materials used accord with the Sustainable Development in Government initiative.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much the Department spent on first class travel in each year since 1997. [206574]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was created following the Machinery of Government changes on 29 May 2002. The information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

All travel complied with the requirements of the Ministerial Code, Travel by Ministers and the Civil Service Management Code.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many overseas trips, and at what total cost, have been made by his Office in each year since 1997; and what the costs of *(a)* flights, *(b)* internal travel, *(c)* hotel accommodation and *(d)* subsistence were of each trip. [206651]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was created following the Machinery of Government changes on 29 May 2002. The detailed information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Since 1999, the Government publishes, on an annual basis, the total costs of all ministerial overseas travel and a list of all visits by Cabinet Ministers costing in excess of £500. Copies of the lists are available in the Library of the House. All travel is conducted in line with the requirements of the Ministerial Code.

All travel by staff is conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Civil Service Management Code.

Departmental Properties

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many properties are held by the Office; what total floor space these properties provide; how many properties are vacant; and how much floor space vacant properties comprise. [206484]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is responsible for 29 leasehold and freehold properties making up a total net Internal Area of 209,985 m2. This figure includes 20,212 m2 that is occupied by other Government Departments but does not include space that the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister occupies in Other Government Departments' buildings. Although the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has overall responsibility for the buildings occupied by Government Offices, they carry out functions on behalf of ten Government Departments.

There were no properties vacant as at 1st December 2004.

Departmental Staff

Keith Vaz: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) how many of the staff employed by his Department have a declared disability; [205772]

(2) how many women there are in senior positions in his Department. [205773]

Yvette Cooper: The Cabinet Office collects and publishes annually statistical information on the civil service by Department. These include data on the number of women in senior positions in Departments and on the number of staff who have a declared disability.

The latest available information at April 2004 is available in the Library of the House and on the civil service website at the following addresses.

http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management_information/statistical_information/statistics/publications/xls/gender_apr04_4nov04.xls

http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management_information/statistical_information/statistics/publications/xls/disability_apr04_4nov04.xls

Derbyshire Fire Authority

Mr. McLoughlin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much funding was made available to the Derbyshire fire authority in each of the last five years. [207517]

Mr. Raynsford: For 2004–05, Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) received £17.542 million in Formula Grant. For FRAs Formula Grant is equal to the sum of Redistributed Business Rates and Revenue Support Grant. Derbyshire FRA is a combined fire authority which gained major precepting status in

2004–05. Previously, funding was received from the constituent authorities of Derbyshire county council and Derby city council. Formula Grant for these constituent authorities included provision for education, personal social services, highways maintenance and environmental, protective and cultural services as well as fire services and capital expenditure. As there are no restrictions on local authority decisions to spend Formula Grant it is not possible to say how much Formula Grant was made available for Derbyshire FRA in these years. For the purposes of calculating the 2004–05 figure, an indicative amount was calculated to show what would have happened in 2003–04 if Derbyshire FRA had been a major preceptor at that time. This amount was calculated to be £16.706 million, however this is an indicative amount only.

For 2004–05 Derbyshire FRA also received £0.456 million transitional funding in recognition that there may be a lag between costs and savings of fire and rescue service modernisation.

For 2004–05 Derbyshire FRA received £0.875 million in Supported Capital Expenditure (Revenue). It received £0.815 million basic credit approvals in 2003–04, £0.873 million in 2002–03, £0.727 million in 2001–02 and £0.727 million in 2000–01.

In 2004–05 Derbyshire FRA received grants of £50,544 from the Community Fire Safety (CFS) Innovation Fund and £95,642 capital to establish a programme of Home Fire Risk Checks targeted on the most vulnerable households and combined with installation of free 10 year smoke alarms and, where justified, automated fire suppression systems. It also received £33,796 from the Arson Control Forum Innovation Fund in 2001–02.

According to the provisional local government finance settlement for 2005–06 Derbyshire FRA will receive £18.520 million formula grant, a 5.6 per cent. increase on 2004–05, and £0.882 million SCE(R). It is also due to receive a further £50,544 from the CFS Innovation Fund and £95,642 capital grant for Home Fire Risk Checks.

E-mails

Sue Doughty: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what his Department's policy is in relation to the storage and deletion of e-mails; and whether this policy has been reviewed in the past 12 months. [206756]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister continues to implement well established policies and procedures for the review and disposal of files in accordance with its administrative needs and the Public Records Act.

E-mail messages that form part of the official record are saved for as long as business needs require and stored corporately in accordance with departmental record management procedures. Further e-mail guidance is available on the National Archives web site at: http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/electronicrecords/advice/pdf/managing_e-mails.pdf.

This policy is regularly reviewed to ensure that the amount of e-mail kept locally by staff remains within the e-mail system quota in force at the time to ensure efficient running of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's IT infrastructure.

Energy Efficiency

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many units of social housing are deemed not to meet thermal efficiency rating Standard Assessment Procedure 65, broken down by local authority area. [204629]

Keith Hill: In 2001, 2.9 million social sector dwellings had a Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) rating of less than 65. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not collect this data by local authority area.

Ethnic Minorities

Keith Vaz: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the extent to which his Department's policies meet the needs of ethnic minorities. [205771]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has made a commitment, in its Race Equality Scheme, to considering the impact of its policies and functions on ethnic minorities.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Race Equality Scheme was published in May 2003 on our website, and highlights key activities where race is a consideration. The scheme was developed in consultation with staff across the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and its agencies and with external stakeholders, including the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE). To date there have been two reviews of the scheme. The first review is available on our website and in hard copy. The second is to be submitted to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's board shortly, together with an outline for the new scheme. Again, this will involve consultation with both internal and external stakeholders.

Nine training seminars, developed in line with CRE guidance, have been rolled out to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's staff with responsibility for undertaking race impact assessments on policy.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister continues to be actively involved in the development and implementation of the Home Office led Community Cohesion and Race Equality Strategy and with the Department of Work and Pensions led Ethnic Minority Employment Strategy with senior representation on the steering groups of each and a high level of official interaction.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister also continue to work closely with CRE on race equality issues, a recent example being the production of the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit ethnicity monitoring guidance for partnerships.

Fire Control Centres

Nick Harvey: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) what arrangements are in place to begin construction of regional fire control centres; [206904]

(2) if he will make a statement on the cost of building a new regional fire control centre in the South West; [206907]

(3) if he will make a statement on the proposed site for the South West regional fire control centre. [206908]

Mr. Raynsford: The buildings for the proposed new Fire and Rescue Service Regional Control Centres, including that for the South West, are currently being procured through a competitive tender process. The sites will not be known until the process is complete and developers have been chosen. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister expects this in the first quarter of 2005. Thereafter the chosen developers will be required to make appropriate arrangements for the construction of the control centres, on the sites they have put forward, to meet the project timescales and requirements. The developers will bear the costs of construction and will carry construction risk. The cost of the lease-in each region will be known once the developer has been chosen.

Nick Harvey: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate he has made of the number of people who will be working in each regional fire control centre; and what equipment will be installed in each one. [206905]

Mr. Raynsford: The number of staff to be employed in each Regional Control Centre (RCC) will vary regionally, reflecting different demand levels. The requirement for fall back also means that RCC network is being designed to include the capacity to operate under spate and extreme conditions, even if one or more of the centres were to be unavailable for any reason.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is currently procuring the control centre technology under the EU's negotiated procedure to provide modern, high quality technology including an integrated command and communications system, a mobilising and resource management system, GIS and gazetteer, and an automatic vehicle location system in each RCC. The most advanced brigades in the country—including Norfolk, London and Greater Manchester—have formed the basis for a large number of our requirements. We are taking the best features of these and other systems and enhancing them to create a complete solution for the benefit of all fire and rescue services. The procurement will also provide networking equipment to connect together the RCCs, creating a national resilient network.

Nick Harvey: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what guidance he has given to brigades which will be required to relocate to the new regional fire control centres on costs which may be incurred from relocation. [206906]

Mr. Raynsford: Fire and Rescue Authorities have been advised that net additional costs associated with the transition to regional control centres will be supported in line with new burdens principles. The 'new burdens' principle means that, where a central government department's policies or initiatives increase the cost, in any specific financial year, of providing local authority services, the Government will fund the additional expenditure, provided that the aggregate value of the burdens across all authorities in England is greater than £100,000.

Fire Control Rooms

Patrick Mercer: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what evaluation has been undertaken of the technology to be used in emergency fire control rooms; and what its anticipated cost is per room. [207298]

Mr. Raynsford: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is undertaking a major procurement under the EU's negotiated procedure to provide modern, high quality technology, including integrated command and communications systems mobilising and resource management system, Graphical Information Systems (GIS) and gazetteer, and an automatic vehicle location system, for each Regional Control Centres (RCC). The most advanced systems in existing fire and rescue control rooms have formed the basis for the requirements. We are taking the best features of these and other systems and putting them together to create a complete solution for the benefit of all fire and rescue services. Information on expected costs is included in the draft outline business case, available on the FiReControl website at http://www.firecontrol.odpm.gov.uk.

Fire Service

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what his policy is on the inclusion of representatives of the fire service unions other than the Fire Brigade Union within the new negotiating machinery for pay and conditions within the fire service. [206062]

Mr. Raynsford: It remains Government policy, as set out in the White Paper "Our Fire and Rescue Service", that union participation in negotiating arrangements for the Fire and Rescue Service should be widened. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister hopes that voluntary reforms will achieve this and it is understood that negotiations about voluntary reform are continuing. However, the Government have taken reserve powers under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 which would enable them to set up new statutory arrangements if voluntary reforms do not result in improvement.

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many fire control officers were employed on *(a)* 31 March and *(b)* 30 September by each of the English fire and rescue authorities. [206067]

Mr. Raynsford: The following table shows the information requested.

Staff in post on 31 March 2004 (all persons having a fire control rank)

Fire and rescue authorities	*Staff (full time equivalents)*
Bedfordshire and Luton Combined Fire and Rescue Authority	25
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Fire and Rescue Authority	31
Essex Combined Fire and Rescue Authority	44
Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority	24
Norfolk Fire and Rescue Authority	26
Suffolk Fire and Rescue Authority	23
Derbyshire Combined Fire and Rescue Authority	29
Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Combined Fire and Rescue Authority	31
Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue Authority	24

Staff in post on 31 March 2004 (all persons having a fire control rank)

Fire and rescue authorities	*Staff (full time equivalents)*
Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Authority	26
Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire and Rescue Authority	25
London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority	103
Cleveland Combined Fire and Rescue Authority	25
County Durham and Darlington Combined Fire and Rescue Authority	28
Northumberland Fire and Rescue Authority	20
Tyne and Wear Metropolitan Fire and Civil Defence Authority	40
Cheshire Combined Fire and Rescue Authority	27
Cumbria Fire and Rescue Authority	19
Greater Manchester Fire and Civil Defence Authority	65
Lancashire Combined Fire and Rescue Authority	43
Merseyside Fire and Civil Defence Authority	58
Royal Berkshire Combined Fire and Rescue Authority	34
Buckinghamshire Combined Fire and Rescue Authority	20
East Sussex Combined Fire and Rescue Authority	26
Hampshire Combined Fire and Rescue Authority	38
Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Authority	12
Kent and Medway Towns Combined Fire and Rescue Authority	39
Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority	22
Surrey Fire and Rescue Authority	29
West Sussex Fire and Rescue Authority	28
Avon Combined Fire and Rescue Authority	32
Cornwall Fire and Rescue Authority	16
Devon Combined Fire and Rescue Authority	31
Dorset Combined Fire and Rescue Authority	23
Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Authority	23
Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority	19
Wiltshire and Swindon Combined Fire and Rescue Authority	22
Herefordshire and Worcestershire Combined Fire and Rescue Authority	21
Shropshire Combined Fire and Rescue Authority	16
Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Combined Fire and Rescue Authority	33
Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Authority	18
West Midlands Fire and Civil Defence Authority	65
Humberside Combined Fire and Rescue Authority	28
North Yorkshire Combined Fire and Rescue Authority	22
South Yorkshire Fire and Civil Defence Authority	39
West Yorkshire Fire and Civil Defence Authority	51

Source:

Fire and Rescue Authority annual returns to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

No additional data are collected in year, and therefore the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not have different figures for numbers of staff at 30 September.

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether technology other than TETRA will allow direct voice communication between personnel from different services at the scene of an incident under the proposed Firelink Integrated Radio System for the fire services. [206078]

Mr. Raynsford: Firelink is a wide-area radio system (covering communications between a control room and fire appliance). It does not replace the Fire and Rescue Services at-incident communications.

Highways Maintenance Budget

Tom Brake: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the budget of each London local authority for road and pavement maintenance was in each of the last two years; and what the overspend or under spend of each was in each year. [207058]

Mr. Raynsford: The following table shows for all London authority the budget for road and pavement maintenance for 2001–02 and 2002–03, and the amount by which this figure was over or under spent in each year.

	2001–02		*2002–03*	
	Budget	*Over/ (under) spend*	*Budget*	*Over/ (under) spend*
Greater London Authority	52,360	19,592	84,407	43,187
City of London	7,679	(487)	6,965	27
Camden	4,626	908	6,116	608
Greenwich	4,974	494	6,168	(1,561)
Hackney	2,538	4,962	10,431	(3,769)
Hammersmith and Fulham	4,734	(2,148)	2,972	(627)
Islington	3,454	187	6,295	(2,289)
Kensington and Chelsea	8,585	(462)	8,909	(14)
Lambeth	2,308	(324)	3,954	(1,274)
Lewisham	5,009	(821)	5,086	(734)
Southwark	4,846	1,985	5,972	(415)
Tower Hamlets	3,014	984	3,088	906
Wandsworth	3,681	(1,711)	3,137	(12)
Westminster	15,476	173	14,788	(1,193)
Barking and Dagenham	4,718	757	4,436	937
Barnet	10,944	346	11,690	1,037
Bexley	5,897	555	6,122	944
Brent	7,407	(1,393)	7,588	(1,607)
Bromley	9,541	195	10,322	(102)
Croydon	8,326	(5)	8,491	(3,065)
Ealing	8,310	(394)	7,686	(2,121)
Enfield	4,810	1,194	5,255	2,179
Haringey	4,771	(402)	3,800	(2,479)
Harrow	3,034	(252)	2,918	19
Havering	5,414	1,114	4,662	2,159
Hillingdon	6,547	(1,447)	5,417	60
Hounslow	3,586	322	3,704	193
Kingston upon Thames	3,348	1,021	4,158	350
Merton	5,271	(2,386)	5,602	(2,361)
Newham	4,850	(376)	4,842	101
Redbridge	4,929	(31)	4,974	(471)
Richmond upon Thames	3,471	255	3,191	782
Sutton	4,509	(719)	4,204	(203)
Waltham Forest	6,555	(1,160)	9,713	(4,108)

All figures are shown in £000s and the amounts are as reported by the local authority. The budget data are taken from the Revenue Account forms and the outturn data are taken from the Revenue Outturn forms for the respective years.

Homeless People

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many homeless people in Coventry sought help from Coventry city council in the last year for which figures are available; and how many homeless people are accommodated by Coventry city council. [206965]

Keith Hill: Information collected about local authorities' actions under homelessness legislation is in respect of households, rather than persons. The total number of decisions made in respect of applications during 2004, and the number of homeless households in accommodation arranged by Coventry city council at the end of each quarter, is listed in the following table.

Coventry city council

	Decisions made on homelessness applications[1]	Households in accommodation[2] arranged by local authorities, at end of the quarter	
	All households	All households	Of which: those with or expecting dependent children
January-March 2004	551	16	5
April-June 2004	451	17	11
July-September 2004	401	6	3

[1] Households applying for assistance in obtaining accommodation where the authority had reason to believe the applicant was homeless, or threatened with homelessness under legislation.

[2] Households in accommodation arranged by Coventry city council under homelessness legislation.

Source:

ODPM PIE homelessness returns (quarterly)

In each quarter, bed and breakfast accommodation was predominantly used, with just two households in hostels.

Coventry city council reported six persons who sleep rough—that is, those who are literally roofless—following a single night's street count in March 2004.

After being accepted as homeless, a household will be placed in some form of accommodation. They may be placed in temporary accommodation, until a settled solution becomes available, or they may be given a settled solution straight away depending on the accommodation available to the local authority. As an alternative to temporary accommodation an authority may arrange for a household to remain in their current accommodation (homeless at home), until a settled solution becomes available.

Some of the households in temporary accommodation were being accommodated pending completion of enquiries into their application, or awaiting the outcome of an local authority review/county court appeal against the authority's decision, or had been found intentionally homeless and subsequently were being accommodated for a reasonable period as permitted under legislation. The latest quarterly Statistical Release on statutory homelessness, published by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister on 13 December, presents analyses up to the end of the third quarter of 2004. Information on decisions, and households in temporary accommodation, at local authority level is contained in an associated Supplementary Table. These have been made available in the Library of the House, and via the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what projections were made for *(a)* the Spending Review technical note to PSA 5, Indicator 3, published on 24 November and *(b)* Chapter 2 of the Departmental Performance Report published on 2 December on the number of statutorily homeless families with children living in temporary accommodation by 2006; and if he will make a statement. [206231]

Keith Hill: Reducing homelessness is a key part of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's strategy to achieve our PSA5 target, to balance housing markets in all the regions. Indicator 3 focuses on statutorily homeless families with children in temporary accommodation as a measure of acute housing need.

Trajectories represent the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's assessment of the outcomes we aim to achieve over time through our policies and action to deliver them. They are based on a range of factors, any of which may change over time. We have been working to improve our methodology for projecting changes and the quality of the underlying data.

The Departmental Performance Report covers the period up to November 2004. Projection *(b)* showed a reduction of 1,400 by 2006 compared with a trend-based projection (ie a projection of what would happen without policy intervention). It assumed that there would be no additional social housing units over those already agreed in SR02 and that the level of homelessness acceptances would level off until 2006–07 before declining due to homelessness prevention measures.

The PSA5 Technical Note relates to the new departmental targets agreed as part of the Spending Review 2004 and will come into effect from 1 April 2005. Projection *(a)* showed a reduction of 7,400 by 2006 compared with a trend-based projection. It assumed that additional social housing units would be delivered in line with the SR04 settlement and that homelessness prevention measures would start to reduce acceptances straight away.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what measures he *(a)* has taken and *(b)* plans to introduce to protect homeless people from assault and wounding. [206585]

Keith Hill: The Government take the issue of violent crime and the impact it has on people's lives very seriously, this includes those who are homeless. That is why we have introduced a number of measures to tackle violent crime, including violence in the streets, and are continuing to do so.

Examples of these measures include:

Concerted action against street robbery achieving falls of 24 per cent. in the priority areas over the first two years of the Street Crime Initiative.

Tackling low-level thuggery through measures to reduce alcohol-related crime and antisocial behaviour.

A further campaign against alcohol misuse was launched on 17 December and will run until 3 January in 180 policing areas. This campaign will build on the lessons learned from the summer campaign and encourage police forces to use tailor-made good practice to deal with local problems.

Tackling Violent Crime Programme(a programme to help local areas reduce violent crime and improve local partnership working, which was launched in November in six police force areas who are already delivering solutions to violent crime.

The Government are also taking action against the use of knives and on 15 December, my right hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield Brightside (Mr. Blunkett) announced measures that included considering legislation to ban the sale of knives to under-18s.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is aware of the vulnerability of homeless people on the streets which is why we have focused our efforts to ensure that the number of those sleeping rough is reduced. Rough sleeping has been reduced by over 70 per cent. since 1998, and these reductions have been sustained. Rough sleeping is now at its lowest recorded level.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) if he will make a statement on the support services offered by his Department to help homeless people find housing; [206586]

(2) whether the Government plans to give extra funding for services to and support for homeless people; [206587]

(3) how his Department provides access to accommodation for homeless people; [206593]

(4) what assessment he has made of the consistency of provision for the homeless across England. [206594]

Yvette Cooper: The Government is committed to tackling homelessness and has successfully tackled the worst manifestations of homelessness—rough sleeping and the long term use of B and B hotels for homeless families with children. We have invested £260 million over three years to 2005–06. This is helping local authorities and voluntary sector agencies to deliver front-line services and take forward initiatives to develop effective preventive measures.

Other investments include £150 million revenue and capital funding to support local authorities implement their homelessness strategies and to take forward a new hostel improvement programme that will help to improve and re-design front-line services to help rough sleepers away from the streets; £1.716 billion for Supporting People for 2005–06, with a further £1.7 billion for 2006–07 and £1.7 billion for 2007–08 and an increase in the supply of new social housing by 50 per cent. by 2008 which together with support for homelessness prevention initiatives will turn around the growth in homelessness by 2008.

The Homelessness and Housing Support Directorate within the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister works closely with local authorities and voluntary sector agencies (including housing associations), providing them with technical and financial support.

In relation to accessing housing, local housing authorities have a statutory obligation to ensure that suitable accommodation is available for applicants who are eligible for assistance, have become homeless through no fault of their own, and who fall within a priority need group (this is the 'main homelessness duty'). The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has strengthened the statutory protection available to people who become homeless through the Homelessness Act 2002 and widened the categories of vulnerable people in priority need, who authorities must help. In addition, under the 1996 Housing Act local authorities are required to give reasonable preference for certain groups of people when framing their allocations policy. This includes people who are homeless.

Applicants who do not have priority need or who have made themselves homeless intentionally must be assisted by the local authority with any efforts they make to secure accommodation for themselves. Applicants can also seek advice from their local housing advice centre or Citizen's Advice Bureau.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister funds the National Homelessness Advice Service (NHAS). NHAS has been supported by Government since it was established in 1990. It is a partnership between Shelter and Citizen's Advice (formerly NACAB) to ensure that everyone has access to good quality advice on homelessness and related issues through their local Citizens Advice Bureau—more recently this has also been extended to some independent advice centres.

The Homelessness Act 2002 required every local authority to have a strategy in place by July 2003 to ensure that accommodation and support are available for homeless households and those at risk of homelessness.

In November 2004, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister published an evaluation of 'Local Authorities' Homelessness Strategies'. It was carried out by Housing Quality Network Services (HQNS) between February and July 2004, on behalf of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

The evaluation reports a positive response to the process of producing and adopting these reviews and strategies. The full report and the summary can be obtained via the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website at: http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_control/documents/contentservertemplate/odpm_index.hcst?n = 5500&l = 3

House Prices (Dagenham)

Jon Cruddas: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the average house price is in Dagenham; and what it was *(a)* five and *(b)* 10 years ago. [207159]

Mr. Raynsford: House price data at a local authority level are only available from 1996. The following table shows the average price in the London borough of Barking and Dagenham in the third quarter of 1996 (eight years ago), the third quarter of 1999 (five years ago) and the third quarter of 2004.

Period	*Average price (£)*
Q3 1996	52,279
Q3 1999	69,831
Q3 2004	[1]169,239

[1] Provisional.

Source:
HM Land Registry

Housing

Alan Simpson: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what planning powers local authorities have to restrict the conversion of family housing into houses in multiple occupation. [206769]

Keith Hill: The "Town and Country (Use Classes) Order 1987" (the UCO) sets out classes of uses, changes within which do not require planning permission due to the similarity in their impact on local amenity, for example: traffic generation, noise, and visual appearance.

The UCO classifies dwelling houses as a C3 use class. This includes dwelling houses used by a single person, any number of persons living as a family, or by no more than six people living together as a single household. Any change of use from this status would normally require planning permission.

Housing Stock Transfers

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether his Department keeps a recommended or reference list of finance groups in relation to finance for large-scale voluntary council house transfers. [207038]

Keith Hill: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not keep a list of recommended finance groups in relation to the financing of large-scale voluntary transfers of council housing stock.

Local Government Finance

Mr. Leigh: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) what plans he has to take account within the formula grants system the rapid growth in population experienced by some local authorities; [206811]

(2) if he will end the limits on the gains in formula grant that authorities are entitled to formula changes made in 2003–04; and if he will make a statement. [206852]

Mr. Raynsford: In announcing the provisional Local Government Settlement for 2005–06 on 2 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 805, it was made clear the Government's decision to abolish the ceilings which had previously limited the maximum amount of grant which could be paid to certain authorities.

The Government will continue to provide a guaranteed minimum percentage increase in grant to all authorities. This "floor" increase must be paid for within the total amount of grant available for authorities each year; authorities with increases above the floor will have those increases scaled back by a fixed percentage.

The consultation paper 'Three-year Revenue and Capital Settlements' published on 15 December seeks views on whether population projections should be used in calculating grant allocations, hence making the grant allocations more forward looking.

Mr. Leigh: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether he will use current population figures in the formula grant calculations made by his Department for the support of local authority services; and if he will make a statement. [206850]

Mr. Raynsford: The provisional 2005–06 formula grant calculations use the mid-2003 population estimates published by the Office for National Statistics on 9 September 2004. These are the latest population estimates available.

Mr. Leigh: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has to introduce a local income tax as an assigned revenue; and if he will make a statement. [206854]

Mr. Raynsford: My right hon. Friends the Deputy Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer have appointed Sir Michael Lyons to conduct an independent inquiry into the funding of local government in England, and to report by the end of 2005. The inquiry will consider, in the light of the report by the Balance of Funding review, the detailed case for changes to the present system of local government funding, and make recommendations on any changes that are necessary and how to implement them. As well as making recommendations on how best to reform council tax it will conduct a through analysis of options other than council tax for local authorities to raise supplementary revenue, including local income tax, the reform of non-domestic rates and other possible local taxes and charges, as well as the possible combination of such options.

Mr. Leigh: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has to review the area cost adjustment; and if he will make a statement. [206857]

Mr. Raynsford: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has no plans for a review of the area cost adjustment (ACA) at this stage. The current arrangements introduced in 2003–04, are generally recognised as a considerable improvement on previous ones. They calculate the ACA at a much finer geography than before, with the ACA for each area reflecting local wage and rates costs.

Following the three year formula freeze, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will be considering, together with representatives of local government, what are the priority issues for any review of the formula.

Mapping Services Agreement

Mr. Swayne: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister on what date the Mapping Services Agreement was due for completion; and if he will make a statement. [206555]

Phil Hope: The Mapping Service Agreement is a public procurement exercise and is a matter for local government and those organisations that bid for the Mapping Service Agreement contracts.

Mobile Phone Masts

Mr. Luff: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will issue new planning guidance to require planning authorities to take greater account of the health effects of radiation from mobile telephones when reaching decisions on such masts. [206600]

Keith Hill: On 12 November the Court of Appeal dismissed an appeal by the First Secretary of State, my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister in the case of the First Secretary of State *v* T Mobile (UK) Limited and others. The Court of Appeal gave consideration to the policy guidance in PPG8. Taking into account that advice, the Court found the First Secretary of State, my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister's policy to mean that in cases where an ICNIRP certificate exists, only in exceptional circumstances would it be legitimate for a local planning authority to take public fears about health risks into account. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister needs to carefully review the transcript of the judgment before deciding what action might be needed in light of it.

MOD Land

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 15 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1119W, on MOD land, if he will place a copy of the framework agreement in the Library. [207055]

Keith Hill: A copy of the framework document was placed in the Library of the House following the announcement of the agreement by my hon. Friend the Member for Hove on 11 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 31WS.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 15 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1119W, on MOD land, how English Partnerships will fund their role under the Sustainable Communities Plan; and if he will make a statement. [207080]

Keith Hill: English Partnerships will fund its role under the Sustainable Communities plan in the normal way, through a combination of grant-in-aid provided by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and receipts from other business activities. The spending review 2004 provided English Partnerships with about £1 billion of resource allocation for the three years April 2005 to March 2008.

Mott MacDonald Report

Patrick Mercer: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he will respond to the Mott MacDonald report. [207299]

Mr. Raynsford: The Government response to the Mott MacDonald report was sent to Chairs of Fire and Rescue Authorities on 11 December 2003 in the form of a consultation paper. Following consideration of the generally positive responses, I made a written statement to the House on 4 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 86WS, confirming the way forward. A copy of a response of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to the issues raised in the consultation paper was made available in the Libraries of the House.

Older People (Rural Areas)

Mr. Drew: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps his Department is taking to identify and spread good practice by local government in providing services for older people, with particular reference to those living in rural areas. [206613]

Mr. Raynsford: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and other departments, such as the Department for Health, the Department for Work and Pensions and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, are currently working with local government, the Local Government Association (LGA), the Improvement and Development Agency, Better Government for Older People and other organisations to ensure best practice in local authorities is identified and spread.

For example, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and other departments are supporting the LGA's 'Action Learning Sets' programme which is designed to help local authorities, including many rural authorities, to work with each other to share good practice and improve services.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister also organises the beacon council scheme which recognises authorities that demonstrate excellence around specific themes and helps them disseminate their good practice. Last year, Stroud district council jointly with Cotswolds district council were awarded beacon status for their services for older people, in recognition of their work to support independent living. Over 100 authorities attended learning events to learn from the best practice of the five beacon authorities under the theme of services for older people.

Part P Schemes

Mr. Burns: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will introduce third party certification for Part P schemes; and if he will make a statement. [206935]

Phil Hope: Installers registered with authorised competent person schemes for Part P of the Building Regulations are allowed to self-certify that the work they have carried out complies with all relevant requirements of the regulations. There are no plans to introduce third party certification of work into such schemes.

Mr. Burns: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether the inspectorate is in place to carry out inspections under the Part P schemes (electrical safety in dwellings); and if he will make a statement. [206936]

Phil Hope: Each competent person self-certification scheme operator is required to have an adequate inspectorate to assess the competence of applicants to the scheme and then to monitor a random selection of completed work to ensure it complies with the relevant requirements of the Building Regulations.

Mr. Burns: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the progress being made in the implementation of Part P schemes of the building regulations; and how the system will be introduced. [206937]

Phil Hope: Five competent person self-certification schemes for Part P of the Building Regulations were formally authorised in July 2004 and a further six in December 2004. All are now accepting and processing applications for membership of the schemes.

Press Officers

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many press officers are employed in his Department. [206530]

Yvette Cooper: As at 1 April 2004 there were 23 press officers employed in the Directorate of Communication for the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

Regional Government

Mr. Alan Williams: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has to hold another referendum on establishing a regional assembly for the north east. [207142]

Mr. Raynsford: None. Section 6 of the Regional Assemblies (Preparations) Act 2003 states that no further referendum can be ordered in "the region until the end of the period of seven years starting with the day on which the referendum was held".

Regional Government (Publications)

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the annualised total cost to the Government office for the south east of producing the publication Go South East was in the latest year for which figures are available; and what the annualised total cost to public funds is of all equivalent publications by Government offices of the regions. [206642]

Phil Hope: The total cost to the Government office for the south east for producing Go South East is £26,983 for 2004. The total cost of all equivalent publications produced by the Government offices for the English regions is £86,869 for 2004.

Regional Housing/Regional Observatories (Funding)

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much central Government funding is being given to *(a)* Regional Housing Boards and *(b)* regional observatories in the current financial year. [205257]

Keith Hill: Regional Housing Boards do not have separate budgets; they are funded from existing Government Regional Office budgets and contributions from other Board members.

Regional observatories are voluntary partnerships formed in the regions. Funding for their activities is provided by a variety of partners in each region. Central Government does not oversee their expenditure.

Document Shredding

Norman Baker: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what factors underlie the increase in the rate of files shredded by his Department since January 2003; and if he will make a statement. [202099]

Phil Hope: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister continues to implement well established policies and procedures for the review and disposal of files in accordance with its administrative needs and the Public Records Act.

Records are destroyed, in accordance with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's disposal policy, when they come to the end of their retention period and they are not required for permanent preservation. The number of files due for destruction in any given year varies. Files destroyed in the last year included a backlog that had developed in the previous two years due to machinery of government changes and the closure of the Hayes Records Repository.

Social Services Budget

Brian Cotter: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the impact of changes in the way central government grants for local social service budgets are calculated on local authorities with a higher than average elderly population. [207252]

Mr. Raynsford: There has been no change in the way we calculate the personal social services formulae spending shares (PSS FSS) in 2005–06. FSS is used to distribute formula grant to councils. The older peoples PSS FSS formulae directs extra resources to authorities with higher than average elderly populations in two ways. Firstly, the formulae allocates a basic amount per person aged 65 or over in each local council area. Secondly, through its age top up, the formulae allocates extra resources to areas with higher proportions of very old people.

There have been changes in the amounts distributed through two Department of Health specific grants, namely those for Preserved Rights and for Residential Allowances. We have listened to local authority concerns about the effect of transferring the majority of the Preserved Rights grant into FSS, originally announced as part of the SR2002 settlement. In co-operation with local authorities, we have agreed an alternative funding mechanism that minimises any adverse distributional impact, and which is based on the premise that a lower proportion of the Preserved Rights Grant will be transferred into the FSS.

In 2005–06 the Preserved Rights Grant will be funded at £348 million instead of the £133 million announced in SR2002. The Residential Allowance grant will transfer into FSS more quickly. The method of allocating the Preserved Rights and Residential Allowance Grant [illegible] local authorities in 2005–06 is unchanged. This will mean less turbulence for local authority funding. We have made corresponding adjustments to the base for allocations to councils of formula grant in 2005–06.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many complaints were made by departmental civil servants regarding the conduct of special advisers between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004. [203463]

Phil Hope: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Member for Bolton, West on 13 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 946W.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister on how many occasions between 31 March 2002 and 31 March 2003 his special advisers travelled abroad in an official capacity; what places were visited; and how much each visit cost. • [207185]

Yvette Cooper: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 10 November 2003, *Official Report*, column 163W.

All travel by special advisers is undertaken fully in accordance with the rules set out in the Ministerial Code and the Civil Service Management Code

Stock Options Appraisal

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what meetings *(a)* Ministers and *(b)* officials in his Department have held regarding the Stock Options Appraisal in (i) Bedfordshire, (ii) Hertfordshire, (iii) Cambridgeshire, (iv) Essex, (v) Suffolk and (vi) Norfolk with hon. Members representing constituencies in these areas. [206902]

Keith Hill: I met with my hon. Friends the Members for Stevenage (Barbara Follett) and Harlow (Mr. Rammell), to discuss, among other things, Stock Options Appraisal, in December 2003. There have been no meetings between officials and hon. Members representing constituencies in these areas to discuss Stock Options Appraisal.

Swale Local Plan

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) what assessment has been made of the numbers of additional *(a)* doctors, *(b)* nurses, *(c)* firefighters, *(d)* police, *(e)* teachers and *(f)* other public sector workers that will be required following the building of the additional homes in Swale's local plan; and if he will make a statement; [207111]

(2) what assessment has been carried out of the requirement for additional *(a)* water, *(b)* electricity and *(c)* other infrastructure that will be required for the new homes to be built in Swale under the local plan; and if he will make a statement; [207113]

(3) how much money has been allocated for the infrastructure plan for Swale's local plan; [207114]

(4) when the infrastructure plan to accompany the new houses to be built for Swale's local plan will be announced. [207115]

Keith Hill: The Second Deposit Draft Swale Local Plan Review is expected in July 2005. Following the statutory consultation period, a local public inquiry will be held into any objections received on the plan. The public local inquiry is likely to take place in the first half of 2006.

The extent and cost of additional service provision and infrastructure required to meet the provisions of the plan, can only be established by the authorities responsible for service and infrastructure provision, who need to work closely with the local planning authority during the plan preparation process. Once the plan is finalized and the extent and distribution of additional development is determined, the requirements feed into infrastructure and service plans and budgets. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister cannot therefore put meaningful figures and dates on these requirements at this time.

I can, however, assure the hon. Member that it is the policy of this Government to ensure that future development is plan led and as such is served by services and infrastructure.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Asbestos

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) pursuant to his answer of 14 December to Question reference 204664, which of the secondary schools identified in each Education and Library Board area as having asbestos have *(a)* white and *(b)* blue asbestos; [206864]

(2) which primary schools in each education and library board area identified as having asbestos have *(a)* white asbestos and *(b)* blue asbestos. [206886]

Mr. Gardiner: I will write to the hon. Lady as soon as possible.

Audiology

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will estimate the number of individuals awaiting provision of digital hearing aids in the Province. [206119]

Angela Smith: The information requested is currently not available.

Autumn Performance Report

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much it cost to *(a)* produce and *(b)* distribute the Northern Ireland Office Autumn Performance Report 2004; and how many copies were distributed. [206885]

Mr. Paul Murphy: The Northern Ireland Office 2004 Autumn Performance Report was printed by The Stationery Office (TSO). Costs of printing and publication are met directly by TSO and do not fall to Government. The NIO is invoiced only for the 190 copies it requested. An additional cost was incurred this year on design and artwork on the report prior to printing. Overall the cost to the NIO of producing the Autumn Performance Report 2004 was slightly over £5,000.

To date the NIO has distributed around 160 copies to a range of Government agencies and public representatives, including the Northern Ireland Members of Parliament, HM Treasury and Northern Ireland Select Committees. Distribution is almost entirely carried out by the government messenger service: details of the cost would be disproportionately expensive to obtain, but it is believed to be minimal. The Stationery Office has its own distribution arrangements.

Clinical Negligence

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much he expects to be required for the settlement of clinical negligence claims in the Province over the next three years. [206350]

Angela Smith: The information requested in respect of the next three years is not available.

However, the amount required within the next five years is currently estimated at £88.5 million.This figure represents the expected timing of payments over the next five years to settle clinical negligence claims outstanding in the HSS Boards and Trusts as at 31 March 2004.

Death Statistics

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people died in the Province in each of the last 10 years as a result of being cold. [205962]

Mr. Pearson: Numbers of cold-related deaths are not available, as cold is not recorded as a cause of death in itself. For the period 1994 to 2003 the annual number of deaths registered in Northern Ireland where hypothermia was mentioned on the death certificate is presented in the following table.

Number of deaths registered with a mention of hypothermia[1]*, Northern Ireland, 1994 to 2003*

	Deaths with hypothermia mentioned
1994	21
1995	14
1996	16
1997	22
1998	22
1999	12
2000	12
2001	16
2002	14
2003	8

[1] Deaths with a mention of hypothermia defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision (ICD-9) code 991.6 for the years 1994 to 2000 and, for the years 2001 to 2003, the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) code T68.

Departmental Credit Cards

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many credit cards for official expenditure are held by his Department. [206438]

Mr. Paul Murphy: The Northern Ireland Office holds one Government Procurement Card (GPC) which is a form of corporate credit card used for low value purchases.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the running costs of the Department were in each year since 1997, broken down by *(a)* electricity, *(b)* water, *(c)* gas, *(d)* telephones, *(e)* mobile telephones and *(f)* televisions. [206676]

Mr. Paul Murphy: The running costs of the Department in each year since 1997, broken down by *(a)* electricity, *(b)* water, *(c)* gas, *(d)* telephones and *(e)* mobile telephones are provided in the following table.

We are unable to provide the running costs for *(f)* televisions as they are captured under the general cost codes "audio visual equipment" and "office equipment". It would be difficult to determine which costs related to televisions only.

£

	1997–98	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*[1]
Electricity	400,073	347,847	401,757	321,005	348,443	386,868	408,424	267,282
Water	3,048	2,940	4,779	5,053	3,823	5,166	2,818	2,140
Gas	4,909	4,714	4,542	3,242	24,752	37,712	49,469	29,623
Telephones	383,867	396,681	531,362	462,080	436,438	751,560	846,335	567,950
Mobile telephones	87,591	105,293	94,346	96,782	25,869	40,872	48,607	38,322
Total	879,488	857,475	1,036,786	888,161	839,325	1,222,178	1,355,654	905,317

[1] Up to December 2004

Departmental Properties

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many properties are held by the Department; what total floor space these properties provide; how many properties are vacant; and how much floor space vacant properties comprise. [206489]

Mr. Pearson: The Northern Ireland Office currently holds 80 properties, of these 14 are vacant and on the market for sale. The total floor space can be calculated only at disproportionate cost.

This answer relates only to the Northern Ireland Office and does not include information in respect of the 11 departments of the Northern Ireland Administration.

Departmental Staff

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many of the staff employed by his Department have a declared disability. [205715]

Mr. Pearson: Of the 11,051 staff in the 11 Departments of the Northern Ireland Administration and the Northern Ireland Office who have provided information on their disability status, the number who declared they had a disability, at 1 April 2004, was 552 (5 per cent.).

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many women there are in senior positions in his Department. [205716]

Mr. Pearson: Of the 226 staff in senior positions in the 11 Departments of the Northern Ireland Administration and the Northern Ireland Office at 1 April 2004, 53 were females.

Disabled Children

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much was spent in the Province on *(a)* time out and *(b)* other services for families of disabled children in each of the last five years. [205954]

Angela Smith: The information requested is not available and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Documents

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what his Department's policy is in relation to the storage of documents and the use of shredders; and whether this policy has been reviewed in the past 12 months. [206767]

Mr. Pearson: The Northern Ireland Civil Service and the Northern Ireland Office continue to implement well established policies and procedures for the storage, review and disposal of documents in accordance with their administrative needs, and also with the Public Records Act (NI) 1923 and the Public Records Act 1958 respectively. There has been no review of such policies and procedures within the past 12 months.

Electronic Devices

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many electronic devices are owned by the Department, broken down by type. [207688]

Mr. Pearson: A record is not kept of all the electronic devices used by the Northern Ireland Office. The information requested therefore could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

E-mails

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what his Department's policy is in relation to the storage and deletion of e-mails; and whether this policy has been reviewed in the past 12 months. [206766]

Mr. Pearson: The policy across Northern Ireland Departments is to print and file any e-mails that form part of the official record. Retention and deletion of e-mails in their printed format is managed in accordance with the Public Records Act (NI) 1923 and guidelines contained in the Northern Ireland Records Management Standard (NIRMS) 2001. Retention and deletion of e-mails in their electronic form is covered by departmental housekeeping policies and procedures. There has not been any major review of these in the past 12 months.

The Northern Ireland Office has an Electronic Document and Records Management System (EDRMS) in place and saving of records to the system is in line with guidelines set out in its Information Management Policy. All e-mails in relation to making policy and information needed for business reasons are saved in the EDRMS and retained for as long as stated in retention schedules.

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on his Department's policy regarding the retention of e-mails in electronic form *(a)* after and *(b)* up to 1 January 2005; and what instructions have been given regarding the deletion of e-mails prior to 1 January 2005. [206950]

Mr. Pearson: The policy across Northern Ireland Departments is to print and file any e-mails that form part of the official record. Retention and deletion of e-mails in their printed format is managed in accordance with the Public Records Act (NI) 1923 and guidelines contained in the Northern Ireland Records Management Standard (NIRMS) 2001. Retention and deletion of e-mails in their electronic form is covered by departmental housekeeping policies and procedures that do not differentiate between the periods prior and post 1 January 2005. No specific instructions have been given regarding the deletion of e-mails prior to 1 January 2005.

The Northern Ireland Office has an Electronic Document and Records Management System (EDRMS) in place and saving of records to the system is in line with guidelines set out in its Information Management Policy. All e-mails in relation to making policy and information needed for business reasons are saved in the EDRMS and retained for as long as stated in retention schedules.

Energy Efficiency

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the role of *(a)* fuel cost reduction and *(b)* income maximization in energy efficiency. [203114]

Mr. Gardiner: Energy efficiency is a key element of the Government's national Climate Change Programme and also offers opportunities to reduce energy costs through more sustainable consumption. Reducing energy costs through greater energy efficiency is a priority in order to enhance industrial competitiveness and alleviate fuel poverty in Northern Ireland.

During 2003–04, £3.9 million raised through the Energy Efficiency Levy was invested in the domestic sector and captured around £17 million of potential customer lifetime savings. This is equivalent to £4.40 saved for every £1 invested.

In the same period energy efficiency audits completed within the industrial and commercial sector identified the potential for £28 million of investment in energy efficiency to secure around £190 million of lifetime savings. The Carbon Trust is continuing to work with businesses in Northern Ireland to leverage the required investment which will help significantly reduce their fuel costs. The trust has been given an additional £1.6 million this year to increase activity in this important area.

Other organisations including the Energy Saving Trust and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive continue to promote and encourage energy saving measures across the public and domestic sectors.

Freedom of Information

Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many staff in his Department were employed to deal with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 issues in *(a)* 2001, *(b)* 2002, *(c)* 2003 and *(d)* 2004; and how many staff are budgeted to deal with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 issues in (i) 2005 and (ii) 2006. [205038]

Mr. Pearson: It is not possible to identify precisely the number of officials who deal with Freedom of Information issues, since it is potentially part of every civil servant's role to respond to Freedom of Information requests. However, one of the primary support functions of Information Management staff is to deal with these issues, plus Data Protection and Records Management. The number of such staff currently employed is cited in the following table. Numbers have varied little since 2001.

Department	*Information management (including FOI) staff*
Northern Ireland Office	5
Environment	3
Regional Development	6
Culture, Arts and Leisure	8
Education	4
Social Development	3
Employment and Learning	4
Finance and Personnel	2
Agriculture and Rural Development	12
Enterprise, Trade and Investment	5
Health, Social Services and Public Safety	4
Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM)	3
OFMDFM (Central FOI Team)	3

Fuel Poverty

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the merits of *(a)* introducing legislative targets for eradicating fuel poverty in the Province, *(b)* establishing a ministerial task force to tackle fuel poverty and winter deaths and *(c)* extending the warm homes scheme to benefit a greater number of pensioners. [205963]

Mr. Spellar: The document Ending Fuel Poverty: A Strategy for Northern Ireland sets out a target of eradicating fuel poverty in Northern Ireland in all vulnerable households and the social rented sector by 2010 and in non-vulnerable households by 2016. The commitment to achieving these targets is no less simply because they are not set in legislation, and this commitment is evidenced by their inclusion in public service agreements which are, and will continue to be, publicly monitored.

The strategy provides for a ministerial group on fuel poverty but I believe that such an arrangement is better suited to a devolved administration. In the interim period of direct rule, I will draw together and chair an inter-departmental group of senior officials to take forward, monitor and review the implementation of the strategy.

Government are determined to eradicate fuel poverty but recognise that budgets are finite and there are many competing priorities. It is vital, therefore, that the most vulnerable in our society are tackled first. To widen the eligibility criteria under the warm homes scheme would divert resources from those in greatest need. However, the qualifying criterion for the warm homes scheme has been revised to include the new tax credits and pension credit to ensure that as many vulnerable people as possible can benefit from the scheme.

Genito-Urinary Medicine

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will estimate the number of patients waiting for genito-urinary assessment in the Province; and what the average waiting time from referral is. [205992]

Angela Smith: Currently there are Genito-urinary Medicine (GUM) Clinics at four sites in Northern Ireland, the Royal Victoria, Causeway, Daisy Hill and Altnagelvin hospitals. Information obtained from each of the hospitals is shown in the following table:

Hospital name	*Number of patients awaiting assessment at 30 September 2004*	*Average waiting time for assessment (weeks)*
Royal Victoria hospital	[1]600 to 700	[2]3
Daisy Hill hospital	0	3
Causeway hospital[3]	0	—
Altnagelvin Area hospital[4]	[5]—	6

[1] Approximately.

[2] Non-urgent cases.

[3] The GUM clinic at Causeway hospital is a 'Walk-In' clinic, where patients attend by self-referral. Therefore a waiting list does not exist for this service.

[4] Altnagelvin Area hospital were unable to provide the number of patients waiting as it does not collect this data.

[5] Not available.

Source:

HPSS Trusts

GP Attendances

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will estimate the number of GP attendances per capita in Northern Ireland *(a)* in the most recent year for which figures are available and *(b)* (i) five, (ii) 10, (iii) 15 and (iv) 20 years previously. [206344]

Angela Smith: The information as requested is given in the table.

General Practitioner consultations in NI per capita for selected years

Financial year	*Consultations per Capita*
2003–04	4.5
1998–99	3.9
1993–94	[1]—
1988–89	2.4
1983–84	[2]—

[1] Data not available from the archived database for this year or for the years either side

[2] Comparable data not available due to different question wording on survey

Source:

NI Continuous Household Survey and Civilian Mid-year Estimate

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will estimate the proportion of the population in the Province who did not attend their general practitioner in the last 12 months. [206345]

Angela Smith: No information is available centrally from GP systems on the aggregate number of persons who consulted their GP within a given period of time. However, using a public attitude survey commissioned by my Department, it has been possible to estimate that 24 per cent. of the Northern Ireland population did not have direct experience of using a GP in the last 12 months.

Health and Personal Social Services

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what percentage of health and personal social services spending in the Province staff salaries accounted for in each of the last five years; and if he will estimate the corresponding percentage for 2005–06. [201948]

Angela Smith: The information requested is detailed in the following table:

Year ended 31 March	*Salaries and wages as a percentage of HPSS Spending*[1]
1999	65.1
2000	66.3
2001	64.3
2002	64.7
2003	61.9

[1] In order to make the figures comparable, expenditure prior to the year ended March 2003 incorporates the resources which were used by GP Fundholders to commission services.

The corresponding percentage for 2005–06 has been estimated at 60–65 per cent.

Health Service Building Programme

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the PPP/PFI health service building programmes in the Province. [206348]

Angela Smith: The following building programmes within Health and Public Social Services are funded by the Private Finance Initiative:

Commissioning body	*Project title*
Royal Group of Hospitals and Dental Hospital HSS Trust	Car Parking
Belfast City Hospital HSS Trust	Renal Unit
United Hospitals HSS Trust	Antrim Hospital Renal Unit
Altnagelvin Hospital HSS Trust	Service Centre (New Pathology pharmacy and changing rooms)

The following building programmes are being considered for funding by the Private Finance Initiative:

Commissioning body	*Project title*
Western Health and Social Services Board	New build hospital
United Hospitals HSS Trust	Antrim Hospital Project

Health Trusts

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many complaints were received by each health trust in the Province during the year ended September 2004. [206346]

Angela Smith: The following table presents information on the total number of complaints received by each Health and Social Services Trust in the year ending September 2004. The Trusts are categorised according to whether they are hospital Trusts, community Trusts, mixed (hospital and community) Trusts, or other Trusts.

Number of complaints received by each Health and Social Services Trust in the year ending September 2004, by category of Trust[1]

Health and Social Services Trust	*Total number of complaints*
Belfast City hospital	181
Green Park	188
Mater Infirmorum	109
Royal Group of hospitals	519
United hospitals	294
Craigavon Area Group	227
Altnagelvin Group	208
Hospital Trusts (Total)	1,726
North and West Belfast	108
South and East Belfast	267
Homefirst	316
Craigavon and Banbridge	116
Foyle	87
Community Trusts (Total)	894
Down Lisburn	295
Ulster Community and hospitals	362
Causeway	494
Armagh and Dungannon	72
Newry and Mourne	144
Sperrin Lakeland	61
Mixed Trusts (Total)	1,428
Northern Ireland Ambulance Service	133
Other Trusts (Total)	133
Northern Ireland Total	4,181

[1] Data is provisional and may be subject to change.

Note:

Community Trusts may provide services in non-acute hospitals, as well as services outside hospital.

Homelessness

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the merits of appointing someone to act as a champion for the homeless in Northern Ireland. [206343]

Mr. Spellar: Unlike other parts of the United Kingdom, Northern Ireland has a single, comprehensive housing authority in the Housing Executive, which has a statutory duty to deal with homelessness. No need has so far been identified to appoint an individual to act as a champion for the homeless.

The new agenda in the Housing Executive's homelessness strategy places a stronger emphasis on dealing with the personal and social causes of homelessness. In November 2004, a review group comprising representatives of Government Departments, statutory agencies and the voluntary sector supported by the Department for Social Development published a consultation paper entitled "Promoting the Social Inclusion of Homeless People". The aim of the consultation is to identify ways in which Government and other agencies can work together to make their services accessible to people who are homeless or who are threatened with homelessness.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many homeless people there were in the Province in each of the last 10 years. [206354]

Mr. Spellar: Over the last 10 financial years the numbers presenting to the Housing Executive as homeless, and those accepted, were as follows:

	Number presented	*Number accepted*
2003–04	17,150	8,594
2002–03	16,426	8,580
2001–02	14,164	7,374
2000–01	12,694	6,457
1999–2000	10,997	5,192
1998–99	11,552	4,997
1997–98	12,672	4,956
1996–97	11,092	4,708
1995–96	10,768	4,319
1994–95	10,068	4,014

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what proportion of homeless people in the Province are female lone parents. [206355]

Mr. Spellar: The information cannot be provided in the format requested. However, the Housing Executive's records show that, during the period 2003–04, 3,118 of those accepted as homeless in Northern Ireland were single parent households (ie 36.28 per cent. of the total accepted as homeless). While a gender breakdown of those single parents is not readily available, it is known that all but a very few were female.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people in the Province are housed in temporary accommodation. [206356]

Mr. Spellar: The following table shows the number of households in temporary accommodation at 30 November 2004. A household can contain one or more persons.

Accommodation type	*Number in accommodation*
NIHE hostels	211
Voluntary sector hostels	455
Private sector lettings	465
House in multiple occupation	172
Total	1,303

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the reasons for the loss by homeless people in the Province of their last settled home. [206357]

Mr. Spellar: The following table shows the reasons for homelessness stated by those presenting as homeless in Northern Ireland during the 2003–04 financial year.

Reason for homelessness	*Number presenting*	*Number accepted*
Sharing breakdown	4,080	1,781
Marital breakdown	2,543	986
Domestic violence	694	606
Loss of rented accommodation	1,992	897
No accommodation in NI	1,920	700
Civil disturbance intimidation	1,190	685
Accommodation not reasonable	1,783	1,438
Release from institution	341	168
Fire/flood/emergency	120	104
Mortgage default	200	87
Bomb/fire damage civil disturbance	55	33
Neighbour harassment	1,442	885
Other reasons	790	224
Total	17,150	8,594

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many rough sleepers there were in the Province in each of the last 10 years; and what proportion of these were drug abusers. [206358]

Mr. Spellar: Attempts in recent years to quantify the level of rough sleeping in Northern Ireland were inconclusive. However, a survey early this year indicated that, while there are between 20 and 30 frequent users of Housing Executive-funded outreach services, no more than 10 people are sleeping rough on any given night (all in Belfast). It has been established that the majority of rough sleepers have alcohol dependency problems and there is also evidence that misuse of drugs is increasing within this group.

Hospices

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what level of funding is being granted by the Government towards *(a)* capital costs and *(b)* recurrent costs in respect of (i) adult hospices and (ii) children's hospices in the current financial year. [205895]

Angela Smith: No recent requests for capital funding have been received from any hospice in Northern Ireland and no capital funding has been provided in the current financial year.

In 2004–05 Health and Social Services Boards are providing recurrent funding of £3,678,635 for adult hospices. In addition, £520,609 is being provided non-recurrently. Boards are now meeting 50 per cent. of the costs of agreed in-patient services at adult hospices.

There is no recurrent statutory funding for the Northern Ireland Children's Hospice as Health and Social Services Boards provide palliative care services for children in the community through the specialist paediatric nursing service. However, this year the Western Board has provided £15,870 (non-recurrent) to the Children's Hospice to fund a project which provides palliative care to life-limited children in their own home in the Western Board area.

Hospital-acquired Infection

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the merits of reintroducing matrons to hospitals in the Province to oversee hygiene and hospital cleaning. [201937]

Angela Smith: When "Modern Matrons" were introduced in England it was noted that in Northern Ireland Nurses in Clinical Services Manager Posts covered the range of responsibilities identified for the "Modern Matron".

To ensure that concerns in relation to infection control issues are addressed locally, I have already announced the formation of a group to develop an Infection Control Strategy. The Strategy will examine key priority areas such as prevention, surveillance, control of MRS A and staff education and training.

Hyperactivity Disorder

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what specialist attention deficit hyperactivity disorder outpatient clinics there are in the Province. [202609]

Angela Smith: Children suspected of having ADHD are in the first instance referred to Child Development Clinics for diagnosis. Services for children with ADHD are provided by community paediatric clinics and Child and Adolescent Mental Health services. Only within the Western Health and Social Services Board are dedicated ADHD clinics in place.

Irish Language

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what response he has made to the March 2004 report of the Committee of Experts on the Implementation of the Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, with particular reference to the recommendation that he recognise the necessity of public funding in order to maintain a newspaper in Irish in Northern Ireland; and what measures he is taking to support the Irish language daily newspaper. [207081]

Angela Smith: Following publication in March 2004 of the Council of Europe's first Report on the United Kingdom's compliance with its commitments under the European Charter, I issued a News Statement which welcomed the Report's findings and reaffirmed the Government's commitment to protecting both Irish and the Ulster-Scots languages, and to continue with the work already in hand.

With regard to the two recommendations made by the Council's Committee of Experts, the Government are at an advanced stage of developing an Irish Language Broadcast Fund, and expect to issue revised and improved Charter Guidance to civil servants in Northern Ireland in the new year.

Lá is currently the only daily Irish language newspaper in publication. It has been successful over the years in attracting significant public sector funding from a range of sources, principally, but not exclusively, from the Irish Language Agency, Foras na Gaeilge, which has the function of facilitating and encouraging the use of Irish in speech and writing. Decisions on applications from *Lá* for public sector funding have been and will continue to be fully assessed on their merits in the light of the terms and conditions of grant stipulated by the funding body.

Mental Health

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what spending per capita on mental health services in the Province was in each of the last five years. [205960]

Angela Smith: The requested information in relation to public spending is provided in the table as follows.

Total Health and Social Services Board Expenditure per head of population on Mental Health Services in Northern Ireland

Year ended March	*NI total per head*
1999	62.2
2000	66.0
2001	72.3
2002	76.4
2003	82.5

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he is taking to improve access to health information and services in the Province for those with mental health difficulties. [205961]

Angela Smith: Access to physical and mental health information and services is identified as a fundamental issue in the draft consultation report "A Strategic Framework For Adult Mental Health Services" emanating from the Regional Review of Mental Health and Learning Disability. Recommendations include that the assessment of people with mental health needs must include assessment of physical health needs, establishing registers of people with severe mental health needs at primary care level, and local providers of service agreeing which service will take responsibility for monitoring physical health.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much was spent on child and adolescent mental health services in the Province in each of the last five years. [206180]

Angela Smith: The available information is detailed in the following table:

Expenditure on child and adolescent psychiatry in hospital[1]

Year ended 31 March	*£000*
1999	2,152
2000	2,263
2001	2,553
2002	2,890
2003	2,982

[1] This summarises the annual expenditure on the consultant led child and adolescent psychiatry specialty in hospital. Expenditure on child and adolescent mental health services provided in a community and personal social services setting is not centrally available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

MRI Scans

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what representations he has received from independent providers of MRI scanning concerning the provision of additional scans on a not-for-profit basis; and if he will make a statement. [206212]

Angela Smith: The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety has had preliminary discussions with one independent provider of MRI services to explore options for the provision of additional MRI scans to patients in Northern Ireland.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to collect more comprehensive statistics regarding the number of patients awaiting MRI scans in the Province. [205989]

Angela Smith: There is currently no regular information collection system in place to ascertain the number of people waiting for MRI scans. Officials will shortly be undertaking a review of the waiting list information collected by the Department. Waiting list information for MRI scans will be considered as part of this review.

Officials will also be working closely with colleagues in Great Britain and will be taking account of the outcome of the Statistics Commission report Enhancing the Value of Health Statistics: User Perspectives.

National Lottery Funding

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much National Lottery funding has been spent on developing sport in *(a)* schools and *(b)* the community in Northern Ireland in each year since its introduction. [205993]

Angela Smith: The following table lists how much National Lottery funding has been spent on developing sport in *(a)* schools and *(b)* the community in each year since its introduction.

£

As at 1 April-31 March	*Schools*	*Community*
1995–96	—	335,536
1996–97	15,320	1,332,371
1997–98	—	4,346,466
1998–99	73,546	8,099,608
1999–2000	3,523	7,224,823
2000–001	32,580	9,753,528
2001–02	317,036	6,477,688
2002–03	438,014	6,683,395
2003–04	616,564	4,483,046
2004-Dec 2004	1,589,362	4,742,078

Newspapers/Periodicals

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the *(a)* newspapers and *(b)* periodicals taken by his Department in each year since 1997; and how much the Department spent on each in each year. [207645]

Mr. Pearson: The question cannot be answered in its entirety as there is no central record held of newspapers and periodicals taken back to 1997 nor is it possible to separately identify the cost under each category except at disproportionate cost. List A lists Newspapers and periodicals taken in the current year and Table B itemises the cost of Newspapers and periodicals since 1997.

This answer relates only to the Northern Ireland Office and does not include information in respect of the 11 Departments of the Northern Ireland Administration.

Newspapers and Periodicals

List A: Daily Newspapers

Newsletter
Daily Express
Irish News
Belfast Telegraph
Daily Telegraph
Daily Star
Financial Times
The Times
The Guardian
Daily Mail
Irish Independent
Irish Times
The Independent
The Sun
Daily Mirror

Sunday and Weekly Newspapers and Periodicals

Ulster Star
Sunday Times
Sunday Independent
Sunday Observer
The Mail on Sunday
Sunday Express
Independent on Sunday
Sunday Telegraph
Sunday Mirror
Ireland on Sunday
Sunday World
Sunday Life
Sunday Tribune
Western Mail
Irish Post
The Observer
Evening Standard
An Phoblacht
Carrickfergus Advertiser
Antrim Guardian
Ulster Gazette
Ballymena Guardian
Dromore Leader
Portadown Times
Windows & Net
Exchange & Outlook Administration
Xchange Administrator
Country Life
Ulster Tatler
Country Homes &Interiors
House & Gardens
Irish Country Sports
Facilities Management
Economist
Government Computing
Computer Weekly
Harvard Review
Press Gazette
New Statesman
The Spectator
Private Eye
Computing
Phoenix
Fortnight
Newtownards Chronicle
Lurgan Mail
Ulster Herald
Lisburn Leader
Newtownabbey Times
Derry Journal
Strabane Chronicle
Computer Active
Antrim Times
Ballymena Times
Coleraine Times
Derry News
Down Democrat
Dungannon Observer
Mid Ulster Observer
Newtownards Spectator
Co Down Outlook
Ulster Gazette
Radio Times
Sunday People
News of the World
Sunday Business Post
Time
Andersonstown News
Newry Democrat
Ballymoney Times
Banbridge Chronicle
County Down Spectator
Coleraine Chronicle
Down Recorder
East Belfast Observer
Strabane Weekly
Tyrone Courier
Tyrone Constitution
Tyrone Times
Police Review
Findings
Audit commission Publication
Fermanagh Herald
Impartial Reporter
Larne Times
Mid Ulster Mail
Mid Ulster Mail (South Derry)
Newry Reporter
Armagh Down Observer
Ballymena Observer
Derry Sentinel
Derry People

Table B: Costings for newspapers and publications

	Cost (£)
2003–04	78,033
2002–03	78,278
2001–02	68,505
2000–01	54,384
1999–2000	58,369
1998–99	64,760
1997–98	57,582

Nurse Endoscopists

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he is taking to encourage the development of the role of the nurse endoscopist in the Province. [206125]

Angela Smith: The number of nurse endoscopists in Northern Ireland is relatively small. Where a Trust has identified the need to develop the role as part of their endoscopy service, support to undertake the relevant training outside of Northern Ireland has been provided. As the demand for endoscopy services increases, consideration will be given to the viability of establishing a local specialist practice course.

One of the DHSSPS funded re-design of community nursing projects is currently exploring the primary and secondary care interface with a view to the primary care based stoma nurse undertaking training to become a nurse endoscopist.

The recommendations arising from the Independent Review of Endoscopes and the DHSSPS Cancer Services Framework, which is currently under development, will also be explored in relation to the further development of the Nurse Endoscopist role.

Occupational Therapy

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many patients *(a)* are awaiting and *(b)* have received in the last 12 months an initial occupational therapy assessment in each trust in the Province. [206349]

Angela Smith: The number of persons *(a)* who were awaiting an occupational therapy assessment at 30 September 2004 and *(b)* who received an initial assessment during the year ending 30 September 2004 are shown, for each Trust and according to priority and non-priority cases, in the following tables.

(a) Number of persons waiting for assessment by community occupational therapists—30 September 2004

Trust	Priority cases	Non-priority cases	Total
Down Lisburn	124	779	903
North and West Belfast	225	1,222	1,447
South and East Belfast	81	204	285
Ulster	51	590	641
Causeway	412	759	1,171
Homefirst	746	1,177	1,923
Armagh and Dungannon	24	354	378
Craigavon and Banbridge	444	315	759
Newry and Mourne	50	893	943
Foyle	227	1,355	1,582
Sperrin Lakeland	204	509	713
Northern Ireland	2,588	8,157	10,745

(b) Number of persons receiving an initial assessment (occupational therapy assessments commenced)—year ending 30 September 2004

Trust	Priority cases	Non-priority cases	Total
Down Lisburn	1,089	1,214	2,303
North and West Belfast	2,104	1,409	3,513
South and East Belfast	4,295	3,470	7,765
Ulster	1,432	2,371	3,803
Causeway	890	337	1,227
Homefirst	4,202	3,701	7,903
Armagh and Dungannon	1,300	811	2,111
Craigavon and Banbridge	3,096	0	3,096
Newry and Mourne	1,776	252	2,028
Foyle	983	1,020	2,003
Sperrin Lakeland	1,198	575	1,773
Northern Ireland	22,365	15,160	37,525

Note:

Craigavon and Banbridge HSS Trust currently carries out assessments only in respect of priority cases.

Paramilitary Organisations

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment the Government have made of whether paramilitary organisations in the Province *(a)* have been and *(b)* are involved in the sale or distribution of counterfeit (i) bank notes, (ii) DVDs, (iii) CDs, (iv) computer games, (v) clothing, (vi) pharmaceuticals and (vii) perfume. [206213]

Mr. Pearson: The Government's assessment of the involvement of individuals with paramilitary links in all areas of counterfeiting and piracy is based on a detailed strategic analysis of information, including seizures and investigations, provided by the partner agencies of the Organised Crime Task Force (OCTF).

The latest assessment of the OCTF is that loyalist and republican paramilitary gangs carry out 80 per cent. of organised intellectual property crime in Northern Ireland and are equally heavily involved in the distribution of counterfeit currency.

Pay Television Subscriptions

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many pay television subscriptions the Department had in each year since 1997; and what the cost was in each year. [207666]

Mr. Pearson: The question cannot be answered in its entirety because there is no central record held of the number of television subscriptions or amounts paid dating back to 1997.

The number of television subscriptions is 26.

Costings

2001–02	4,171.05
2002–03	5,440.22
2003–04	7,826.87

This answer relates only to the Northern Ireland Office and does not include information in respect of the 11 departments of the Northern Ireland Administration.

Police Service of Northern Ireland

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) what method is used by Police Service of Northern Ireland officers to quantify the time spent on investigating a particular case; [202878]

(2) if he will make a statement on the way in which Police Service of Northern Ireland officers keep a record of time spent on a particular case during duty. [202879]

Mr. Pearson: The Human Resource Department of the PSNI employ "activity sampling" as an element of a sophisticated Staff Allocation Model. During such activity sampling police officers supply detailed information, in a standard format, of their time spent on all aspects of their work. While this includes crime investigation, individual cases are not identified.

Officers' duties are also recorded in their notebooks or journals.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many individuals have *(a)* completed and *(b)* dropped out from training as new police recruits in each year since the Police Service of Northern Ireland was established. [206121]

Mr. Pearson: I am advised that the following numbers of students either completed, resigned or were dismissed from the training course:

PSNI trainee constables

	Number of students who completed training	*Number of students who resigned*	*Number of students who were dismissed*
2001	[1]0	1	0
2002	377	6	2
2003	410	8	7
2004[2]	507	16	2

[1] Training commenced for PSNI trainee constables on 4 November 2001

[2] Up to 16 December 2004

Population Statistics

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will estimate the population of Northern Ireland in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 1989. [206339]

Mr. Pearson: The estimated usually resident population of Northern Ireland at mid-year 2003 was 1,702,600 people. The equivalent estimated figure at mid-year 1989 was 1,590,400 people.

Power Lines

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many complaints have been received by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment in relation to disputes arising from landowners challenging permission given to Northern Ireland Electricity to erect overhead power lines since January 2002; how many formal hearings have been organised by DETI; and how many hearings have found in favour of the landowner. [206891]

Mr. Gardiner: No complaints involving a formal challenge of any of the necessary wayleaves granted to Northern Ireland Electricity plc (NIE) for the erection of overhead electric lines since January 2002 have been received by the Department.

Seven wayleave hearings have been organised by the Department in response to such applications in the period. In all but one case, the Department decided, after careful consideration of the representations by the landowner and NIE, to grant the company a necessary wayleave. The remaining application was withdrawn by NIE, following the hearing, as agreement was reached between the company and the landowner on a voluntary wayleave.

Prescriptions

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will estimate the number of prescription items per capita in Northern Ireland *(a)* in the last year for which figures are available and *(b)* (i) five, (ii) 10, (iii) 15 and (iv) 20 years previously. [206352]

Angela Smith: The information as requested is given in the table.

Prescription items dispensed[1] in NI per capita for selected years

Calendar year	*Items per capita*
2003	15.6
1998	13.5
1993	11.5
1988[2]	9.5
1983[2]	9.0

[1] Excludes private prescriptions and those dispensed in a hospital setting

[2] Taken from clerical records

Source:

Central Services Agency and Civilian Mid-Year

Press Officers

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many press officers are employed in the Department. [206526]

Mr. Paul Murphy: There are currently 15 press officers employed in the Northern Ireland Office.

PSA Levels

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what recent guidance has been issued on the management of patients in the Province with slightly elevated PSA levels. [206127]

Angela Smith: The Department has not issued guidance specifically on the management of patients with slightly elevated PSA levels. However CMO Update No. 25, which was issued to all GPs in November 2003, contained information about prostate cancer screening. This emphasised that anyone who requested a PSA test should be informed about the probable benefits and harm of the PSA test, and gave details of where to find information developed by the Prostate Cancer Risk Management Programme.

Depending on the outcome of the test, the person's GP will advise them on what happens next. In the case of a raised PSA level, this may include further tests or referral to a specialist for investigation.

School Finance

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how the new funding arrangements for schools in Northern Ireland will affect in percentage terms each school in North Down constituency. [206556]

Mr. Gardiner: Following the agreement of the Priorities and Budget 2004 on 20 December which set out the overall allocations for education, work is underway to determine the allocations that will issue, under Local Management of Schools common funding arrangements, to individual schools. Once this work is complete, I shall write to the hon. Lady with the details she has requested and place a copy of my letter in the Library.

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the future funding arrangements for schools in Northern Ireland; and how many children he estimates will benefit from the new arrangements. [206581]

Mr. Gardiner: Following consultation during the autumn, I have decided to proceed with arrangements to replace the existing seven Local Management of Schools (LMS) funding formulae with a single, common funding formula. This move will take effect from 1 April 2005 and reflects the commitment made by the Executive under devolution and will ensure that schools of similar size and characteristics are funded in the same way regardless of their geographical location.

Work is continuing to finalise allocations to schools for 2005–06. Once this has been completed, I will make a fuller announcement outlining the changes that I have made to reflect the comments received during consultation and confirming the allocations that will issue to individual schools for 2005–06. I will also write to the hon. Member with the specific details she has requested and place a copy of my statement and this letter in the Library.

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will take steps to prevent *(a)* teachers and *(b)* support staff being made redundant as a result of the new funding arrangements for schools in Northern Ireland. [206579]

Mr. Gardiner: Under Local Management of Schools arrangements, decisions on the employment of teachers and support staff are for Boards of Governors to take in light of their particular circumstances including, in particular, the number of pupils at the school and their educational and social needs. My proposals for a common funding scheme for all schools are designed to ensure that schools with similar characteristics are funded consistently and equitably regardless of their geographical location. I expect that the majority of schools will see increases in their budgets as a result of the move from seven separate Local Management of Schools (LMS) funding schemes to the new common funding arrangements.

However, I am concerned to ensure that the impact of any budget changes arising from the introduction of common funding is managed in a way that minimises disruption to both staff and pupils. That is why the move to common funding will be phased over a transitional period in order to allow schools sufficient time to adjust, particularly those schools which may see a decrease in funding

Social Housing

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much social housing was available in the Province on 1 January *(a)* 2004, *(b)* 1999, *(c)* 1994, *(d)* 1989 and *(e)* 1984. [206353]

Mr. Spellar: The social stock details are as follows:

Date	*Housing stock*
31 March 2004	120,100
1 January 1999	143,500
1 January 1994	158,500
1 January 1989	171,500
1 January 1984	184,000

From 2002 stock totals have been held on a financial rather than a calendar year.

Special Advisers

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many special advisers there are in the Department, broken down by Civil Service pay-grade. [206507]

Mr. Pearson: The Northern Ireland Office currently employs two special advisers (this will reduce to one special adviser with effect from 24 January 2005) whose salaries are within the same range as our mainstream Grade A staff (equivalent to Grade 7).

Their salaries are determined centrally by the Cabinet Office.

Sperrin Lakeland Health and Social Services Trust

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will estimate *(a)* the sum spent to date on work associated with a proposed new acute hospital and new local hospital in the south-west of the Province and *(b)* the proportion of this total that has been provided through annual budgetary allocations to the Sperrin Lakeland Trust. [205969]

Angela Smith: The total expenditure by Sperrin Lakeland Trust on the work associated with the proposed new acute hospital and the new local hospital is £229,667 for the period to 31 October 2004.

Sperrin Lakeland Trust does not plan to use normal service revenues to meet the cost of this project.

Sustainable Employment

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average success rates have been for placing participants in sustainable employment in Northern Ireland in the last 12 months of the *(a)* New Deal and *(b)* work track programme. [206058]

Mr. Gardiner: The success rates for placing participants in sustainable employment in Northern Ireland during the period 1 April 2003 to 31 March 2004 for *(a)* New Deal and *(b)* work track programmes are as follows:

Participants moving into sustained employment[1] *(April 2003 to March 2004)*

Programme	*Leavers*	*Into sustained employment*	*Percentage*
New Deal for18 to 24-year-olds	8,032	1,807	22
New Deal 25 +	6,946	1,142	16
Work track	2,337	370	16

[1] Participants are considered to have sustained employment if they remain in the same spell of employment for 13 weeks or more

Telephone Numbers

Mr. Tyler: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) how much revenue his Department has received from the use of non-geographic 0870 telephone numbers for the period 1 October 2003 to 30 September 2004; [205844]

(2) how many non-geographic 0870 telephone numbers are in use by his Department; and what services can be accessed by calling each of them. [205834]

Mr. Pearson: The Northern Ireland Office does not have any 0870 telephone numbers.

This answer relates only to the Northern Ireland Office and does not include information in respect of the 11 departments of the Northern Ireland Administration.

Tuberculosis/Hepatitis C

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many cases of *(a)* tuberculosis and *(b)* hepatitis C have been recorded in the Province in each of the last 10 years. [205990]

Angela Smith: The number of cases of *(a)* tuberculosis and *(b)* hepatitis C recorded in the Province in each of the last 10 years is detailed in the table.

	(a) Tuberculosis	*(b) Hepatitis C*
2003[1]	57	84
2002	67	75
2001	57	65
2000	57	55
1999	57	46
1998	66	65
1997	70	54
1996	66	55
1995	75	63
1994	81	43

[1] Figure for 2003 relating to tuberculosis is provisional.

Source:
Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre

Tyrone County Hospital

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps are being taken to increase recruitment of professional staff at Tyrone County Hospital. [206122]

Angela Smith: Sperrin Lakeland HSS Trust is currently bringing forward plans for modernising service delivery through the implementation of "Delivering Better Services". In keeping with this modernisation programme opportunities are being taken to create more attractive jobs for professional staff.

The Trust continues to recruit locally and nationally and in addition has sought to recruit from the international market for nursing and medical staff.

Water Meters

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the Government's policy is towards compulsory water metering in Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement. [207209]

Mr. Spellar: It is current policy to meter non-domestic customers and this will continue to be the preferred basis for charging this customer group. Water Service has an ongoing programme of work to extend the scope of metering throughout this sector, although this process will take time and charges for those non-domestic customers who are not yet metered will be based on rateable values. There are no proposals for compulsory water meters for domestic customers.

Works (Greysteel)

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what works have been carried out under the auspices of the Department of Regional Development at Clooney Road, Greysteel, Co. Londonderry over the past two years; when these works commenced; and when they are scheduled to be completed. [206056]

Mr. Spellar: The Chief Executive of Water Service (Mrs. Katharine Bryan) has been asked to write to the hon. Member in response to this question.

Letter from Mrs. Katharine Bryan to Mr. Gregory Campbell, dated 23 December 2004:

You recently asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland a Parliamentary Question about what works have been carried out in Clooney Road, Greysteel, Co. Londonderry over the past two years, when the works commenced and when they are scheduled to be completed. I have been asked to reply as Chief Executive of the Water Service. The reply also contains information provided by Dr Malcolm McKibbin, Chief Executive of Roads Service.

Both Water and Roads Services have undertaken work on Clooney Road, Greysteel during the past two years. The work was co-ordinated closely to ensure that the road improvements, including resurfacing of the carriageway, followed immediately on completion of Water Service work and that disruption to the public was minimised. Liaison meetings were held with the local Community Association which welcomed both the investment by Water Service in the area and the introduction of the traffic calming scheme. The Community Association was also appreciative of the efforts made to co-ordinate the work of both agencies and to minimise disruption.

I have detailed below the schemes involved together with their commencement and completion dates.

Water Service

Water Service has commenced extensive works over the past two years, totalling over £2 million, to improve and extend the water and sewerage infrastructure in the vicinity of Greysteel including :-

Gortgare Wastewater Treatment Works

Replacement of the existing Gortgare Wastewater Treatment Works serving Grey steel. Work commenced in February 2004 and is scheduled for completion next month.

Greysteel Storm & Foul Sewers

Upgrade of sewers and watermains in Clooney Road. Work commenced in October 2003 and was completed during October 2004.

Faughanvale Sewerage Scheme

Provision of first time services to properties on Dunlade Road, Greysteel and the upgrade of an existing sewage pumping station on Clooney Road. Work commenced during August 2003 and is scheduled for completion during March 2005.

Foyle Avenue Foul Sewer & Sewage Pumping Station

Provision of first time services to properties on Foyle Avenue, Greysteel including a new sewage pumping station. Work commenced during January 2003 and was completed during October 2004.

Roads Service

Roads Service is currently installing traffic calming measures and carriageway improvements on Clooney Road at a cost of approximately £400,000. Work commenced on 6 October 2004 and is scheduled for completion by the end of March 2005. Work will include the provision of the following features:

shared use paths on both sides of Clooney Road along the length of the scheme;

service lay-bys;

dedicated bus lay-bys;

a toucan crossing;

additional traffic islands and refuges with central hatching;

new gateway treatment, including signs and coloured surfacing;

upgraded street lighting; and

resurfacing of the carriageway.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Coroners Courts

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the future of coroners courts. [200060]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 30 November 2004]:* Our Position Paper "Reforming the Coroner and Death Certification Service" was published in March 2004. This set out our plans for the comprehensive reform of the arrangements for the investigation and certification of deaths. The Paper indicated that we would issue a more detailed White Paper within a year and we remain committed to doing so.

"Preparing for Emergencies"

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many Preparing for Emergencies leaflets were *(a)* printed and *(b)* distributed. [204454]

Mr. Miliband: I have been asked to reply.

I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by the then Minister for the Cabinet Office to the hon. Member for Eastbourne (Mr. Waterson) on 11 October 2004, *Official Report*, column 59–60W.

2 Marsham Street

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much public expenditure has been allocated for external consultants in relation to the 2 Marsham street private finance initiative. [205345]

Mr. Charles Clarke: As noted in the National Audit Report "PFI The New Headquarters for the Home Office" (HC954 Session 2002–2003 15 July 2003) £8 million was spent on consultants for the procurement phase. Since then approximately £7 million will have been spent on providing professional support for developing the project and monitoring its construction and successful commissioning in the three years up to occupation.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the estimated expenditure on chairs in the new Home Office buildings in 2 Marsham Street is. [205348]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The contract with Anne's Gate Property plc included the selection and provision of task chairs by the developer. It required that the chairs would:

be well designed and of good construction quality;

offer comfort and efficiency for staff; and

be sourced from suppliers that demonstrate environmental standards and sustainable use of resources.

From a short list of seven, the award winning Herman Miller Mirra model was chosen in a two stage process after consultation with the Department including the staff User Group.

The price paid by the developer to the supplier is confidential under the terms of the agreement between them. It took account of the extended warranty period and long-term maintenance costs. The developer decided that for the price paid the Mirra chairs represented the best value for money to deliver their commitment, at their cost risk, to provide and maintain office furniture for the 26 year operating period of the PFI contract.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the cost to public funds was of the demolition of the former Department of the Environment buildings in 2 Marsham Street. [205349]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The demolition of the former Department of the Environment buildings, including the wartime bunkers, was an integral part of the private finance deal with Anne's Gate Property plc (AGP), who took the cost and programme risk. It was believed at the time to be the largest city centre demolition in Europe.

The indicative cost of the demolition provided by AGP was approximately £18.8 million (March 2002 prices) but the actual cost incurred by them is commercially confidential.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the contract period is of the agreement with Anne's Gate Property plc for the redevelopment on the site of the former Department of Environment offices at Marsham street; what the estimated yearly payment from public funds to Anne's Gate Property plc is for the duration of the contract; and what the net present cost of the contract is at current prices. [205346]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The contract with Anne's Gate Property plc (AGP) for the re-development and operation of 2 Marsham street runs from 26 March 2002 to 2 April 2031, a period of 29 years. Payment will commence when the Home Office takes possession of the building which is planned for 26 January 2005.

The first estimated full-yearly payment to AGP is at the rate of £32.3 million provided full operational performance is delivered. This payment will be at a reduced rate until the building is fully occupied. It excludes costs of on demand services such as reprographics and official hospitality. The payment increases annually at about 76 per cent. of the rate of inflation. The annual charge was noted by the NAO Report ("PFI the New Headquarters for the Home Office"—HC954 Session 2002–2003 15 July 2003), to be, if anything, a better deal then would have been secured through commercial rent and procurement of service.

The net present cost of the contract was modelled at £311 million at financial close in March 2002. This has not been remodelled to take account of the various changes since then including the revised Treasury guidance on such calculations.

Air/Sea Ports

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which *(a)* airports and *(b)* seaports are manned 24 hours a day by (i) full-time immigration officials and (ii) full-time special branch officers. [205331]

Mr. Browne: The following ports are staffed by immigration officials 24 hours a day:

Airports

Birmingham
Bristol
East Midlands
Gatwick
Glasgow
Heathrow
Liverpool
Luton
Manchester
Stansted

Seaports

Harwich
Portsmouth

Juxtaposed Controls

Calais Ferryport
Coquelles
Dunkerque

Other ports of entry are staffed to cover all services requiring immigration control. Small air and seaports are staffed on a targeted basis dependant upon the assessment of risk of passenger traffic arriving.

The deployment of Special Branch (SB) officers at seaports and airports is a matter for individual Chief Constables. Deployment will be based on a strategic assessment of each port, which will take into consideration the scale of passenger and freight movements, the routes served by the port, and the impact on counter terrorism, national security and serious organised crime. In some areas, principally at smaller ports, SB officers are deployed through a risk-based tasking and co-ordination process. At major ports there are significant permanent deployments.

Airguns

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many criminal injuries were caused by the use of an airgun in *(a)* the UK, *(b)* the North East and *(c)* Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland in the last year for which figures are available. [204819]

Caroline Flint: The latest available information is for 2002–03 and relates to England and Wales. Information relating to Scotland and Northern Ireland are matters for my right hon. Friends the Secretaries of State for Scotland and Northern Ireland.

There were 2,377 offences in England and Wales where injury was caused by an air weapon. There were 84 offences involving injury in the North East region. Figures for Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland are not collected centrally.

Off-licence Alcohol Sales

Ross Cranston: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prosecutions there have been for off-licence alcohol sales to people *(a)* already under the influence of alcohol and *(b)* under the age of 18 years in each of the last 10 years. [201595]

Paul Goggins: The Home Office Court Proceedings database gives the number of defendants proceeded against in England and Wales, 1994 to 2003, for the offences of: "Selling etc., intoxicating liquor to persons under 18 for consumption on the premises" (including "wholesaler selling intoxicating liquor to a person under 18") and "permitting drunkenness or riotous conduct on the premise, or selling liquor to a drunken person".

Number of defendants proceeded against for certain offences relating to the sale of alcohol[1], England and Wales 1994 to 2003

Offence description	*Statute*	*Year*	*Proceeded against*
Permitting drunkenness or riotous conduct on the premises or selling liquor to a drunken person	Licensing Act 1964, Sec 172;Licensing Act (Occasional Permissions)Act 1983, Sec 3 (Sch para 6)	1994	14
		1995	19
		1996	8
		1997	9
		1998	22
		1999	13
		2000	10
		2001	10
		2002	7
		2003	8
Selling intoxicating liquor to persons under 18 for consumption on the premises[2]	Licensing Act 1964, Secs 169 A&B; Licensing (Occasional Permissions) Act 1983, Schedule (Sec 3) para 4(1)	1994	138
		1995	198
		1996	251
		1997	215
		1998	311
		1999	205
		2000	132
		2001	158
		2002	170
		2003	616

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis.

[2] Includes "wholesaler selling intoxicating liquor to a person under 18".

Animal Experiments (Testing)

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what notification he has received regarding the funding of experimentation on primates in the UK by the US Air Force. [201069]

Caroline Flint: I am not aware of any projects—licensed or proposed to be licensed under the Animals (Scientific Procedures)Act 1986—for which funding has been obtained from the US Air Force.

Financial viability is only one of many factors taken into account when licensing decisions are taken under the 1986 Act, and the source of funding is not itself a prime consideration. Disclosure of that information by applicants is not an explicit requirement, and it is not necessarily known or recorded by the Home Office in particular cases. Data about the known funding sources is not held centrally.

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what research has been carried out into the cost to benefit ratio of experimental animal testing for the purposes of household products; [202833]

(2) what steps the Government are taking to restrict the most severe forms of experimental animal testing for the purpose of household products; [202834]

(3) what requirements are placed by his Department on UK companies to justify the experimental testing of animals for the purposes of household products; [202835]

(4) what action is being taken to limit the number of experimental animal tests carried out for the purposes of developing household products; [202836]

(5) how many experimental toxicity tests on animals have been carried out in the UK in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement. [202837]

Caroline Flint: The use of animals to test household products is to ensure environmental, workforce and consumer safety. This is one of the purposes for which such use may be licensed under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986, and is to meet the requirements of national and international regulatory bodies.

Justification and assessments of applications for licences to undertake such work are on a case-by case basis. Each application has to be approved locally by an ethical review process before being submitted to the Home Office for decision, the whole process being designed to ensure that any animal testing is licensed only after it is deemed to be justified and the related animal suffering minimised.

A form of cost benefit assessment of each individual programme of work has to be undertaken before the Home Office can consider granting the necessary licence. This means that the likely benefits of the work—in terms of generating data for the purposes of risk assessment—must be balanced against the expected welfare costs to the animals involved. No animal testing is licensed without an expert judgment being made on that basis. More information about the statutory cost benefit assessment used in these and all other cases can be found at Appendix I of Guidance on the Operation of the 1986 Act (HC 321).

The 1986 Act additionally provides that animal testing can be licensed only if there are no non-animal alternatives and, where animals must be used, their numbers and suffering are to be minimised. This means that any animal testing judged to be necessary must involve the mildest available procedures for the purpose. Where more severe procedures are unavoidable—and it is unlikely procedures of substantial severity would be needed to test household products—they must be replaced by milder methods as soon as they are validated and then accepted by the regulatory bodies concerned. On the same basis, no animal testing can be authorised once non-animal replacements are developed and generally accepted. These constraints are reflected in a standard condition of project licences, compliance with which is monitored by the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Inspectorate.

The information requested about the number of toxicity test procedures is contained in Table 25 of the annual publication "Statistics of Scientific Procedures on Living Animals, Great Britain, 2003", and Table 12 of each annual publication of "Statistics of Scientific Procedures on Living Animals, Northern Ireland", copies of which are in the Library.

I should add more generally that the Government recognise that there are concerns about this issue and are not complacent about it. We have regular discussions with the UK regulators concerned, and take a leading role in Europe in encouraging the development and adoption of alternatives to all forms of animal use in science. In May 2004 we established the National Centre for the Replacement, Refinement and Reduction of Animals in Research (NC3Rs), which will also be working with regulators on the acceptance of alternative methods for regulatory toxicology.

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many licences have been issued for the testing of animals in laboratories in each of the last three years. [206203]

Caroline Flint: Comprehensive statistics regarding the licensed use in Great Britain of animals under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 are published annually. Copies of the publications for 2001, 2002 and 2003 can be found in the House Library (Cm 5581, Cm 5886 and Cm 6291 respectively).

These publications show that 601 project licences were granted in Great Britain in 2001 under the 1986 Act. The corresponding figures for 2002 and 2003 (the latest available published data) were 695 and 774 respectively.

Each year licences expire or are revoked, as well as granted. For completeness, and to give a more accurate idea of the overall amount of licensed work conducted, I should therefore add that there were 3,309 project licences in force in Great Britain at the end of 2001, and 3,180 and 2,977 at the end of 2002 and 2003 respectively.

Antisocial Behaviour Orders

Dr. Vis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many juveniles were received into prison service custody for breaching antisocial behaviour orders in each month of *(a)* 2002, *(b)* 2003 and *(c)* 2004. [200434]

Paul Goggins: The available information relates to those aged 10–17 given a custodial sentence in 2002 for breaching their antisocial behaviour order. Figures for 2003 will be available in the near future.

Number of persons aged 10–17 given a custodial sentence in 2002 after breaching their ASBO for the first time in 2002 by month

Month of sentence	*Total*
January	0
February	1
March	5
April	2
May	3
June	3
July	3
August	5
September	3
October	7
November	2
December	6
Total	40

Notes:

1. If a person breached their ASBO more than once, the table counts the severest sentence across all breaches.

2. Breaches are counted for ASBOs reported to the Home Office

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* juveniles, *(b)* young offenders and *(c)* adults in England and Wales were sentenced to immediate custody for breach of an antisocial behaviour order in 2003. [201388]

Paul Goggins: Breach data for 2003 are not yet available.

Armed Forces Veterans

Mr. Dhanda: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will extend provision of free passports to veterans of the armed forces who joined up during the Second World War, but who are under the age of 75 years. [205924]

Mr. Browne: There are currently no plans to provide free concessionary passports to any individual born after 2 September 1929. This date was chosen to provide free passports to people who were 16 years of age or older at the end of the Second World War.

Mr. Dhanda: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will estimate the cost of providing free passports to *(a)* all veterans of the armed forces who joined up during the Second World War and *(b)* all people born on or before VE Day. [205925]

Mr. Browne: The scheme for free passports for all those born on or before 2 September 1929 introduced on 18 October this year will include all veterans of the armed forces who joined up during the Second World War. It is not possible accurately to state how many of those in the scheme were members of the armed forces but current estimates of the cost of this scheme is £5 million (year 1) gradually reducing over time.

It is estimated that issuing free passports to all those born on or before VE Day would involve in excess of 600,000 passports per year, at current cost levels resulting in a cost of approximately £30 million per year.

Asylum Seekers

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what criteria are used to determine whether permanent leave to remain should be granted to an applicant who has been granted a work permit in four consecutive years; and whether his policy is to consider such applications only from people in certain professions or trades. [204071]

Mr. Browne: In considering applications for indefinite leave to remain by work permit holders, caseworkers must be satisfied that applicants:

a) have completed four consecutive years in this capacity,

b) are still engaged in the same employment, and

c) have met the requirements of Paragraph 131 of HC 395.

Grants of indefinite leave to remain under this category are not affected by a person's profession or trade.

Mr. Malins: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects the construction of the accommodation centre for asylum seekers near Bicester to be completed; when he expects it to be ready to accept asylum seekers; and if he will make a statement. [204786]

Mr. Browne: It is expected that construction of the accommodation centre near Bicester will be completed in late 2006. It is planned that occupation of the centre will be built up over a period of between three and four months from the opening date.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the estimated number of asylum seekers residing in each parliamentary constituency is. [205114]

Mr. Browne: Figures for asylum seekers (including dependants) in receipt of NASS accommodation support in each parliamentary constituency as at the end of September 2004 are presented in the following table. Corresponding figures for those not in receipt of NASS support are not available.

Information on the number of asylum seekers supported by NASS is published quarterly on the Home Office Research Development and Statistics Directorate website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html.

Asylum seekers supported in NASS accommodation[1,2,3,4] by parliamentary constituency and UK Government office region, as at the end of September 2004

GOR/parliamentary constituency name [5]	*Number of asylum seekers*
East Midlands	
Derby North	135
Derby South	545
Gedling	20
Leicester East	155
Leicester South	225
Leicester West	450
Lincoln	20
Loughborough	15
Northampton North	5
Northampton South	*
Nottingham East	710
Nottingham North	60
Nottingham South	365
Rushcliffe	5
South Derbyshire	5
Sub-total	2,715
East of England	
Bedford	5
Central Suffolk and North Ipswich	*
Epping Forest	15
Ipswich	55
Luton North	*
Luton South	10
North West Cambridgeshire	95
Norwich North	60
Norwich South	45
Peterborough	255
Rochford and Southend East	10
Southend West	5
Stevenage	*
Sub-total	565
Northern Ireland	
Belfast North	15
Belfast South	50
Belfast West	30
East Londonderry	*
Newry and Armagh	*
Sub-total	100
London	
Barking	25
Beckenham	10
Bethnal Green and Bow	*
Bexleyheath and Crayford	5
Brent East	5
Brent North	10
Brent South	10
Brentford and Isleworth	*
Camberwell and Peckham	10
Chingford and Woodford Green	45
Chipping Barnet	10
Croydon Central	40
Croydon North	25
Croydon South	5
Dagenham	10
Dulwich and West Norwood	10
Ealing North	25
Ealing, Acton and Shepherd's Bush	20
Ealing Southall	25
East Ham	30
Edmonton	100
Eltham	*
Enfield North	65
Enfield Southgate	50
Erith and Thamesmead	*
Feltham and Heston	10
Finchley and Golders Green	20
Greenwich and Woolwich	5
Hackney North and Stoke Newington	30
Hackney South and Shoreditch	50
Hammersmith and Fulham	15
Hampstead and Highgate	10
Harrow East	15
Harrow West	10
Hayes and Harlington	10
Hendon	15
Holborn and St. Pancras	5
Hornsey and Wood Green	95
Ilford North	10
Ilford South	35
Islington North	30
Islington South and Finsbury	40
Kingston and Surbiton	10
Lewisham East	10
Lewisham West	20
Lewisham Deptford	10
Leyton and Wanstead	10
Mitcham and Morden	5
North Southwark and Bermondsey	15
Old Bexley and Sidcup	5
Poplar and Canning Town	15

Asylum seekers supported in NASS accommodation[1,2,3,4] by parliamentary constituency and UK Government office region, as at the end of September 2004

Asylum seekers supported in NASS accommodation[1,2,3,4] by parliamentary constituency and UK Government office region, as at the end of September 2004

GOR/parliamentary constituency name[5]	*Number of asylum seekers*
Regent's Park and North Kensington	15
Richmond Park	5
Streatham	15
Sutton and Cheam	5
Tooting	5
Tottenham	270
Twickenham	5
Upminster	5
Uxbridge	5
Vauxhall	20
Walthamstow	40
West Ham	40
Sub-total	1,475
North East	
Darlington	30
Gateshead East and Washington West	75
Hartlepool	30
Houghton and Washington East	120
Jarrow	25
Middlesbrough	595
Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland	75
Newcastle upon Tyne Central	460
Newcastle upon Tyne East and Wallsend	470
Newcastle upon Tyne North	155
North Tyneside	150
Redcar	255
South Shields	120
Stockton North	210
Stockton South	180
Sunderland North	130
Sunderland South	240
Tyne Bridge	775
Tynemouth	65
Sub-total	4,165
North West	
Altrincham and Sale West	5
Ashton under Lyne	245
Blackburn	235
Bolton North East	225
Bolton South East	400
Bolton West	60
Bootle	55
Burnley	30
Bury North	320
Bury South	120
Cheadle	5
Crewe and Nantwich	10
Denton and Reddish	75
Eccles	140
Hazel Grove	30
Heywood and Middleton	15
Hyndburn	*
Leigh	200
Liverpool Garston	10
Liverpool Riverside	340
Liverpool Walton	160
Liverpool Wavertree	350
Liverpool West Derby	70
Makerfield	160
Manchester Central	520
Manchester Blackley	150
Manchester Gorton	450
Manchester Withington	35
Oldham East and Saddleworth	150
Oldham West and Royton	310
Pendle	20
Preston	*
Rochdale	410

Asylum seekers supported in NASS accommodation[1,2,3,4] by parliamentary constituency and UK Government office region, as at the end of September 2004

GOR/parliamentary constituency name[5]	*Number of asylum seekers*
Rossendale and Darwen	85
Salford	705
Stalybridge and Hyde	45
Stockport	115
Stretford and Urmston	85
Wigan	210
Worsley	105
Wythenshawe and Sale East	65
Sub-total	6,720
Scotland	
Glasgow Anniesland	470
Glasgow Baillieston	145
Glasgow Cathcart	270
Glasgow Govan	1,105
Glasgow Kelvin	540
Glasgow Maryhill	180
Glasgow Pollok	255
Glasgow Rutherglen	195
Glasgow Shettleston	380
Glasgow Springburn	2,120
Sub-total	5,665
South East	
Brighton Pavilion	35
Dartford	5
Hastings and Rye	215
Hove	40
Medway	5
North East Milton Keynes	*
Oxford East	15
Portsmouth North	135
Portsmouth South	255
Slough	10
Southampton Itchen	*
Southampton Test	*
Sub-total	720
South West	
Bristol East	225
Bristol North West	40
Bristol South	25
Bristol West	65
Exeter	30
Gloucester	85
Kingswood	85
North Swindon	40
Plymouth Devonport	50
Plymouth Sutton	340
South Dorset	*
South Swindon	75
Sub-total	1,060
Wales	
Cardiff Central	405
Cardiff North	60
Cardiff South and Penarth	365
Cardiff West	160
Clwyd South	10
Gower	15
Newport East	170
Newport West	155
Swansea East	570
Swansea West	320
Wrexham	45
Sub-total	2,280
West Midlands	
Aldridge-Brownhills	130
Birmingham Edgbaston	200

Asylum seekers supported in NASS accommodation[1,2,3,4] by parliamentary constituency and UK Government office region, as at the end of September 2004

GOR/parliamentary constituency name [5]	*Number of asylum seekers*
Birmingham Erdington	185
Birmingham Hall Green	15
Birmingham Hodge Hill	50
Birmingham Ladywood	1,140
Birmingham Northfield	5
Birmingham Perry Barr	365
Birmingham Selly Oak	110
Birmingham Sparkbrook and Small Heath	315
Birmingham Yardley	25
Coventry North East	235
Coventry North West	85
Coventry South	460
Dudley North	265
Dudley South	225
Halesowen and Rowley Regis	110
Meriden	95
Mid Worcestershire	5
Newcastle-under-Lyme	35
Nuneaton	5
Solihull	5
Stoke-on-Trent Central	380
Stoke-on-Trent North	235
Stoke-on-Trent South	110
Stourbridge	95
Walsall North	135
Walsall South	250
Warley	510
West Bromwich East	160
West Bromwich West	90
Wolverhampton North East	415
Wolverhampton South East	110
Wolverhampton South West	255
Sub-total	6,805
Yorkshire and The Humber	
Barnsley Central	320
Barnsley East and Mexborough	80
Barnsley West and Penistone	130
Batley and Spen	15
Bradford North	230
Bradford South	175
Bradford West	790
City of York	5
Colne Valley	170
Dewsbury	105
Don Valley	40
Doncaster Central	855
Doncaster North	70
Great Grimsby	155
Halifax	260
Hemsworth	35
Huddersfield	655
Keighley	5
Kingston upon Hull East	40
Kingston upon Hull North	225
Kingston upon Hull West and Hessle	360
Leeds Central	835
Leeds East	600
Leeds North East	335
Leeds North West	20
Leeds West	260
Morley and Rothwell	5
Normanton	65
Pontefract and Castleford	75
Pudsey	*
Rother Valley	25
Rotherham	570
Sheffield Central	660
Sheffield Attercliffe	175
Sheffield Brightside	290
Sheffield Heeley	155
Sheffield Hillsborough	25
Shipley	70
Wakefield	240
Wentworth	80
Sub-total	9,210

[1] Figures have been rounded to nearest 5, with (*) = 1 or 2, and are provisional.

[2] Asylum seekers that have been allocated NASS accommodation and have been confirmed as having arrived in that accommodation.

[3] Excludes unaccompanied asylum seeking children supported by local authorities, estimated at around 7,000 in May 2004. Excludes cases that pre-date the establishment of NASS in April 2000, administered under arrangements with local authorities, estimated at up to 16,000 cases in May 2004 (the number of such cases is falling).

[4] Excludes cases where support has been ceased by the National Asylum Support Service.

[5] Only those Parliamentary constituencies where NASS dispersed or disbenefitted cases are resident are shown.

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many young people entering England seeking asylum as an unaccompanied minor in each year since 2000 were subsequently deported after their 18th birthday; and if he will make a statement. [206701]

Mr. Browne *[holding answer 21 December 2004]:* The information requested on removals is not available. Although statistics of the removal of failed asylum seekers include young people who entered the UK seeking asylum as unaccompanied minors, they do not separately identify such persons.

Asylum seekers apply for asylum in the UK rather than specifically in England, Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland.

The table shows total number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children in the year stated.

Unaccompanied children[1,2,3], aged 17 or under, applying for asylum in the UK, 2000 to 2003

	Number of principal applicants
2000[4]	2,735
2001[4]	3,470
2002[5]	6,200
2003[5,6]	3,180

[1] Figures are rounded to the nearest five.

[2] Unaccompanied at point of arrival, aged (or if no proof) determined to be 17 or under and not known to be joining a relative or guardian in the United Kingdom.

[3] Figures exclude disputed age cases.

[4] May exclude some cases lodged at Local Enforcement Offices.

[5] Not comparable with manual counts data prior to 2002.

[6] Provisional figures.

Information on asylum applications and removals are published quarterly on the Home Office website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html.

Belmarsh Detainees

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the cost is of enforcing the bail conditions imposed on detainee G, who was released on bail from HMP Belmarsh in April; and if he will make a statement. [206705]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 21 December 2004]*: Premier Monitoring have been monitoring the detainee referred to as "G" since February 2004. The Electronic Monitoring element of his Bail Order cost £8,685.60 including VAT up to the end of December 2004.

Other costs incurred include legal challenges lodged by G, (for example, to amend the conditions attached to his bail) and regular visits to him by Immigration Officers and, where appropriate, the police. Were G to travel away from his home, under the terms of the order, he would need to travel with a police escort. These costs are not monitored centrally.

Biometrics

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the use of facial recognition systems by police forces; and what assessment he has made of their impact in *(a)* securing convictions and *(b)* reducing crime. [203032]

Caroline Flint: The Facial Images National Database (FIND) project currently being undertaken by the Police Information Technology Organisation (PITO) is aiming to deliver a nationally available "mugshot" database of facial images, linked to the respective PNC records, in 2006. One key element of this project involves providing guidance to police forces on image capture standards in order to ensure that the database is populated with the best possible images.

Face recognition systems, with current technology, are most effective when used for "one to one" matching, for example to help verify that an individual is who they claim to be. Despite significant advances in the last few years, the technology still has some way to go before it is capable of reliably performing "face in the crowd" type searches against either a large database or a smaller "watch-list".

Post-event analysis is an example of a promising area for the use for facial recognition technology. The facial recognition element of the victim-focused work with regards to child abuse images being undertaken by the National Crime Squad is proving very successful in identifying victims and perpetrators of child sexual abuse and in identifying links between cases.

A number of direct law enforcement applications have been implemented, including the London borough of Newham partnership with the Metropolitan Police to provide facial recognition as part of a town centre protection application.

PITO continues to maintain close links with both industry and academia regarding developments in this field, and are also undertaking a programme of work to evaluate the current potential for this technology in a variety of policing applications.

British Passports

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will make a statement on his Department's policy on issuing British passports to South African nationals who are serving in the British Army and married to British citizens; [205442]

(2) whether South African nationals who are married to a British citizen are eligible to be issued with a British passport while continuing to serve in the British Army; [205443]

(3) what steps a South African national serving in the British Army and married to a British citizen should take to apply for a British passport. [205444]

Mr. Browne: Under Section 6(1) (section 6(2) if married to a British citizen) of the British Nationality Act 1981 applicants for naturalisation must meet, among other things, a number of residence requirements which are detailed in Schedule 1, paragraph 1 (2) of the Act.

The residence requirements include five years residence in the UK immediately prior to application (three if married to a British citizen) and a mandatory requirement to have been physically in the UK on the actual date five years (three if married to a British citizen) prior to the date of application. There is no discretion to waive the requirement to have been physically present in the UK at the start of the five year qualifying period (three years if married to a British citizen) where an application is being made on the basis of residence.

These requirements have not been amended and have been applied consistently since the Act came into force on 1 January 1983.

There is scope under the Act for Crown Service overseas, on the date of application for citizenship, to act as an alternative to the residence criteria outlined above, (Schedule 1 paragraph 1(3) of the Act). However the Home Office applies very strict criteria in such cases and very few applications are ever granted on this basis. Examples of cases we have approved include applicants who had more than 20 years Crown service with British embassies, at pro- and vice-consul level and their applications were supported by current and previous ambassadors.

In line with the recent review into the Home Office immigration and naturalisation policy for Gurkhas, the policy for naturalisation for all servicemen has been changed. We will, generally, no longer naturalise a member of the armed forces while they are still in service. Once discharged, ex-servicemen who have served four or more years in the armed forces will be eligible to apply for settled status. Once settled they will be free to live and work in the UK indefinitely and will be able to apply for naturalisation, subject to meeting the usual residence requirements. The new policy takes account of the potential high levels of absences that ex-servicemen may have and will enable these to be waived in most cases.

Our policy on applications made under the Crown Service arrangements has not changed as a result of the review; we will continue to apply the same strict criteria in these cases.

Child Detention

Dr. Vis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will take steps to ensure that legislation concerning children's interests applies equally to children in prison and children in asylum detention centres, following the recent judgment in Regina (on behalf of the Howard League for Penal Reform) *v*. Secretary of State for the Home Department. [203014]

Paul Goggins: The judgment of the Administrative Court in R (on the application of the Howard League for Penal Reform) *v*. Secretary of State for the Home Department and Another clarified the law in relation to young people in custody. The court ruled that local authorities continue to have responsibilities towards children who are detained in young offender institutions, subject to the requirements of custody. The Home Office, the Youth Justice Board and the Department for Education and Skills have taken a range of measures to implement that ruling and also to strengthen child protection and safeguarding generally for young people in custody. Most notably, the board is funding the provision of 25 new social worker posts in Young Offender Institutions.

Although the judgment related specifically to children in young offender institutions, the Government accept that its general principles would apply in the context of children detained under Immigration Act powers. The Immigration and Nationality Directorate is meeting the broad principles set out in the judgment to the extent that it is possible for it to do so in the context of immigration detention and the removal of failed asylum seekers and others.

The Children Act 2004 places legal protections for young people in custody on a statutory footing. It places a duty on prison governors or directors, and governors or directors of secure training centres, to make arrangements for ensuring that their functions are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Governors or directors of juvenile young offender institutions and secure training centres also become board partners in Local Safeguarding Children's Boards, which will be established to co-ordinate, and ensure the effectiveness of, safeguarding in their children's services authority area.

The children of asylum seekers and refugees are not excluded from the arrangements in the 2004 Act. The arrangements under sections 10 (co-operation to improve well-being), 11 (arrangements to safeguard and promote welfare) and 13–16 (Local Safeguarding Children Boards) of the Act are intended to cover all children. This includes those seeking asylum or refugees, when they come into contact with the agencies involved in the arrangements or, more generally, through the focus of the section 10 co-operation arrangements on all children.

Although the statutory duty to promote and safeguard the welfare of children was not placed on the Immigration Service, the IS takes its responsibilities towards children very seriously and fully appreciates the importance of identifying vulnerable children, including those who may be detained with their families. All removal centres that may hold families with children are required to have in place child protection policies and procedures based on a national template and to maintain close ties with local agencies involved in child protection and welfare matters. In addition, while the Immigration Service is not a core member under the duty to co-operate to improve well-being or the duty to establish Local Safeguarding Children Boards, where appropriate the Immigration Service will be involved in these arrangements. This would include those areas in which removal centres holding families with children are located.

Child Abuse

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many individuals have been convicted of child abuse offences in each of the last five years in England; and what proportion of offenders were *(a)* men and *(b)* the parent or step-parent of the child victim in each year. [205290]

Paul Goggins: Statistics on the number of offenders convicted of sexual offences involving minors, are provided in the table. The figures also include the proportion of offenders found guilty who were male, aged 18 and over.

It is not possible to identify the relationship of the offender to the victim, as these data are not collected centrally on the Home Office court proceedings database.

Statistics for 2004 will be available in autumn 2005.

Number of offenders found guilty at all courts, and the percentage of which were males aged 18 and over for sexual offences against minors where the age of the victim is identified by the offence[1,2] England 1999 to 2003

	1999		2000[3]	
	Found guilty	Percentage that were male aged 18 and over	Found guilty	Percentage that were male aged 18 and over
Buggery by a male of a male under 16	49	96	46	98
Buggery by a male aged 21 or over with a male aged 16 or 17	1	100	3	100
Buggery by a male aged 18–20 with a male aged 16 or 17	1	100	—	—
Buggery by a male with a female under 16	11	91	12	100
Buggery by a male aged 21 or over with a female aged 16 or 17	—	—	1	100
Buggery by a male aged 18–20 with a female aged 16 or 17	1	100	1	100
Indecent assault on male person under 16 years	308	85	275	82
Gross indecency by a male aged 21 or over with a male aged under 18	8	100	11	100
Rape of a female aged under 16	222	94	188	92
Rape of a male aged under 16	32	59	21	67
Attempted rape of a female aged under 16	42	86	29	86
Attempted rape of a male aged under 16	6	50	2	50

Number of offenders found guilty at all courts, and the percentage of which were males aged 18 and over for sexual offences against minors where the age of the victim is identified by the offence[1,2] England 1999 to 2003

	1999		2000[3]	
	Found guilty	Percentage that were male aged 18 and over	Found guilty	Percentage that were male aged 18 and over
Indecent assault on a female under 16	1,376	85	1,201	85
Unlawful sexual intercourse with girl under 13	51	75	48	73
Unlawful sexual intercourse with girl under 16	180	93	197	87
Incest with a girl under 13	13	77	12	83
Inciting girl under 16 to have incestuous sexual intercourse	1	100	2	100
Householder permitting unlawful sexual intercourse with girl under 16	—	—	—	—
Person responsible for girl under 16 causing or encouraging her prostitution etc.	1	0	—	—
Male aged 21 or over procuring or attempting to procure a male under 18 of gross indecency with another male	3	100	3	100
Abduction of unmarried girl under 16	1	100	3	67
Abduction of unmarried girl under 18	1	100	—	—
Gross indecency with boys aged less than 16	66	89	51	88
Gross indecency with girls aged less than 16	134	95	128	92
Total	2,508	78	2,234	86

	2001		2002	
	Found guilty	Percentage that were male aged 18 and over	Found guilty	Percentage that were male aged 18 and over
Buggery by a male of a male under 16	57	98	49	94
Buggery by a male aged 21 or over with a male aged 16 or 17	—	—	—	—
Buggery by a male aged 18–20 with a male aged 16 or 17	—	—	—	—
Buggery by a male with a female under 16	7	86	9	100
Buggery by a male aged 21 or over with a female aged 16 or 17	1	100	—	—
Buggery by a male aged 18–20 with a female aged 16 or 17	—	—	—	—
Indecent assault on male person under 16 years	256	84	281	78
Gross indecency by a male aged 21 or over with a male aged under 18	—	—	4	100
Rape of a female aged under 16	168	93	193	96
Rape of a male aged under 16	26	69	30	87
Attempted rape of a female aged under 16	30	87	37	86
Attempted rape of a male aged under 16	5	80	4	100
Indecent assault on a female under 16	1,194	84	1,229	81
Unlawful sexual intercourse with girl under 13	49	61	44	68
Unlawful sexual intercourse with girl under 16	194	87	210	84
Incest with a girl under 13	4	75	10	90
Inciting girl under 16 to have incestuous sexual intercourse	3	100	3	67
Householder permitting unlawful sexual intercourse with girl under 16	1	0	—	—
Person responsible for girl under 16 causing or encouraging her prostitution etc.	—	—	—	—
Male aged 21 or over procuring or attempting to procure a male under 18 of gross indecency with another male	2	100	4	100
Abduction of unmarried girl under 16	2	50	3	100
Abduction of unmarried girl under 18	—	—	—	—
Gross indecency with boys aged less than 16	73	89	68	87
Gross indecency with girls aged less than 16	154	88	168	90
Total	2,226	85	2,346	83

	2003	
	Found guilty	Percentage that were male aged 18 and over
Buggery by a male of a male under 16	40	100
Buggery by a male aged 21 or over with a male aged 16 or 17	—	—
Buggery by a male aged 18–20 with a male aged 16 or 17	—	—
Buggery by a male with a female under 16	5	100
Buggery by a male aged 21 or over with a female aged 16 or 17	—	—
Buggery by a male aged 18–20 with a female aged 16 or 17	—	—
Indecent assault on male person under 16 years	247	85
Gross indecency by a male aged 21 or over with a male aged under 18	—	—
Rape of a female aged under 16	239	94
Rape of a male aged under 16	26	77
Attempted rape of a female aged under 16	32	88
Attempted rape of a male aged under 16	8	63
Indecent assault on a female under 16	1,137	85
Unlawful sexual intercourse with girl under 13	44	61

	2003	
	Found guilty	*Percentage that were male aged 18 and over*
Unlawful sexual intercourse with girl under 16	233	90
Incest with a girl under 13	9	56
Inciting girl under 16 to have incestuous sexual intercourse	2	50
Householder permitting unlawful sexual intercourse with girl under 16	—	—
Person responsible for girl under 16 causing or encouraging her prostitution etc,	—	—
Male aged 21 or over procuring or attempting to procure a male under 18 of gross indecency with another male	—	—
Abduction of unmarried girl under 16	2	50
Abduction of unmarried girl under 18	—	—
Gross indecency with boys aged less than 16	79	89
Gross indecency with girls aged less than 16	177	90
Total	2,280	86

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis.

[2] Excludes those offences where the age of a victim cannot be identified in the wording of the offence.

[3] Staffordshire Police Force were only able to submit sample data for persons proceeded against and convicted in the magistrates courts for the year 2000 Although sufficient to estimate higher orders of data, these data are not robust enough at a detailed level and have been excluded from the table.

Civil Service

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average length of time taken for civil service staff to pass security vetting procedures was in the last period for which figures are available. [204453]

Mr. Miliband: I have been asked to reply.

The security vetting process is managed by the employing or contracting Government Department. Details of the time taken to carry out individual clearances are not held centrally.

The length of time taken to carry out a clearance is dependent on a number of factors. These include the nature and extent of the checks involved at each level of clearance: Developed vetting (DV) clearance, which is necessary for long term frequent and uncontrolled access to top secret information or assets, requires a greater breadth and depth of checks as well as an interview with the subject and referees, and generally takes longer to carry out than a security check (SC—for long term, frequent and uncontrolled access to secret information or assets) or counter-terrorist check (CTC—for access to public figures or establishments at particular risk of terrorist attack).

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many days sick leave were taken by civil servants in the Department in each year since 1997; and what the sickness absence rate was in each year. [204518]

Fiona Mactaggart: The following is a table of recorded sick leave for staff within the main Home Office Department since 1997:

			Days sick		
	Calendar days		*Working days*	*Percentage WD lost*	*Staff covered*[1]
1997	—	191,812	141,837.82	6.9	9,174
1998	—	189,107	139,837.57	6.7	9,317
1999	—	186,074	137,594.78	6.2	9,812
2000	—	212,102	156,841.52	6.3	11,060
2001	—	222,924	164,843.98	6.6	11,142
2002	—	248,650	183,867.40	6.5	12,607
2003	—	286,259	226,685.29	6.9	14,686
2004	—	92,115	74,226.14	6.6	10,026
2002	Core and IND	—	160,357	5.5	—
	Core	—	32,917	6.0	—
	IND	—	127,440	4.0	—
2003	Core and IND	—	149,216.3	4.1	—
	Core	—	31,946	4.5	—
	IND	—	117,270.3	3.2	—
2004	Core and IND	—	155,632	4.2	—
	Core	—	31,043	3.0	—
	IND	—	124,589	4.1	—

[1] Staff sick in calendar year, sickness begins before end of year, ends after start.

Notes:

1. Calendar to working day conversion has been given by applying the ratios found in the earliest available full breakdown (November 2002) to the earlier data. This provides an adjustment for part year workers, and part-time staff. However it assumes that years previous to 2002 had a similar ratio of such staff.

2. Figures are lower than those for 2002 from archive, in part because of winter sickness November/December 2002 that will have not reached the system at the time this report was run in November.

Class A Drugs

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people are in prison for dealing in class A drugs. [204776]

Paul Goggins: On 31 October 2004, there were 12,058 persons in prison establishments for all drugs offences, as recorded on the Prison Service central IT system. Of these, 1,150 were recorded as being on remand for "unlawful supply" or "possession with intent to supply", with 6,850 recorded as being under immediate custodial sentence for the same offences[1]. These figures are not available by class of drug.

[1] Estimated figures that are rounded to the nearest 50.

Community Punishments

Ross Cranston: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the target was for Enhanced Community Punishment commencements in England and Wales in 2003–04; and whether that target was achieved. [204123]

Paul Goggins: The target for Enhanced Community Punishment commencements in England and Wales for 2003–04 was 25,000; the target was exceeded with the achievement of 34,681 commencements (39 per. cent above the target).

Correspondence

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will reply to the letter to him dated 11 October from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to Mr. Kamal Mohammed. [201349]

Mr. Charles Clarke: I wrote to my right hon. Friend on 3 December 2004.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department for what reasons he has not yet replied to the letter of 15 November from the hon. Member for Yeovil in relation to an immigration appeal, Home Office reference D1086636; and if he will make a statement. [204865]

Mr. Browne *[holding answer 15 December 2004]:* The Under-Secretary of State, my hon. Friend the Member for Slough (Fiona Mactaggart), wrote to the hon. Member on 14 December.

Counterfeit Medicines

Mr. Flook: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prosecutions have taken place for counterfeiting prescription-only medicines in each year since 1997. [201721]

Paul Goggins: The number of defendants proceeded against in England and Wales 1997 to 2003 for the offence of "Forgery etc. of prescription in respect of scheduled drug" is contained in the following table.

Number of defendants proceeded against for "Forgery etc. of prescription in respect of a controlled drug"[1], England and Wales 1997 to 2003

	Proceeded against
1997	73
1998	84
1999	102
2000	97
2001	112
2002	94
2003	103

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis.

Court Reports

Ross Cranston: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of court reports written for the courts in England and Wales by the National Probation Service were produced within 15 days of a request for that report in the last period for which figures are available. [204119]

Paul Goggins: The information requested for 2003–04 and the first six months of 2004–05, is provided in the table.

	Number provided in response to request	Number provided within 15 working days of request	Percentage meeting standard
2003–04	110,712	72,141	65
2004–05 (April-September)	69,844	54,336	78

Ross Cranston: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether any probation areas in England and Wales reported that they had failed to produce court reports within the 15 days work standard because of staff shortages, vacancies or resource issues in the last period for which information is available. [204120]

Paul Goggins: The Home Office does not collect data on the reasons for failure to produce court reports. Centrally available data shows that the proportion of court reports provided within 15 days of request in the first half of 2004–05 was 78 per cent. Although this falls short of the 90 per cent. target, it is a significant improvement on the 65 per cent. achieved in 2003–04.

The National Probation Directorate are currently exploring the possibility of introducing a more appropriate target that measures the proportion of reports that meet the time scale set by the courts, which in many cases may be different from the current 15 working days standard.

Probation staff are employed by the 42 local Probation Boards and staff shortages are a matter for each individual employer. The number of staff working in the National Probation Service has increased from 13,968 in 1997 to 19,237 in March 2004, an increase of over 5,000 extra staff.

CRB Registration

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will list the *(a)* national governing bodies of sport, *(b)* county sports associations and *(c)* sports clubs that have registered as an accredited body with the Criminal Records Bureau; [201816]

(2) what the total cost is of registering with the Criminal Records Bureau as a registered body; and whether there is a minimum number of checks that must be carried out each year; [201817]

(3) how many Criminal Records Bureau checks have been carried out through accredited sports bodies since the establishment of the Criminal Records Bureau. [201818]

Ms Blears: All organisations wishing to register with the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) must pay a £300 registration fee. Additional Countersignatory applications cost £5 each. There is currently no annual minimum requirement for the number of checks submitted by registered bodies.

I am unable to provide a definitive list of all national governing bodies of sport, county sports associations and sports clubs that are registered with the CRB. When applying to become registered bodies, all organisations are requested to identify their business sector from a list provided by the CRB. Sports associations are categorised under the leisure services business sector, but not all organisations who are involved in sports activities identify themselves under leisure services. The CRB is therefore unable to identify from the business sector whether registered bodies belong specifically to the groups in question.

Furthermore, the business sector information is not a mandatory part of the registration process and the CRB is aware that a number of registered bodies have not provided this detail. This also prevents the CRB from providing a complete analysis of the business sector for its registered bodies.

Many organisations also use the services of umbrella bodies to access the disclosure service and the sporting bodies about whom my hon. Friend is concerned may also be using this route, which again prevents a complete analysis.

Consequently, the CRB cannot provide the total number of disclosures issued to the sports bodies in question. It is estimated that the leisure industry accounts for about 7 per cent. of all disclosures issued.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how long it has taken on average since January for the Criminal Records Bureau to process an application from a drugs service relating to an individual who wishes to work in England and Wales. [201064]

Ms Blears: The Criminal Records Bureau is unable to provide the information sought without details of the specific organisation or individual. The hon. Member for Chesham and Amersham may wish to provide further details directly to the Bureau who will be pleased to provide a full response.

Criminal Appeals

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he plans to amend the Criminal Appeal Act 1968 to allow *(a)* documentary and *(b)* photographic evidence relevant to the case but not presented at the trial to be used in an appeal. [204949]

Paul Goggins: Section 23 of the Criminal Appeal Act 1968 already empowers the Court of Appeal, if it considers it necessary or expedient in the interests of justice, to order the production of any document, exhibit or other thing which appears necessary for the determination of the appeal. This includes any evidence which was not presented at the trial from which the appeal lies. When considering whether to receive any evidence the Court of Appeal must have regard to various factors: whether the evidence appears to the Court to be capable of belief; whether the evidence may afford any ground for allowing the appeal; whether the evidence would have been admissible in the trial; and whether there is a reasonable explanation for the failure to adduce the evidence at the trial.

Criminal Justice Intervention Panels

Ross Cranston: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the cost of the Criminal Justice Intervention panels in the 2004–05 financial year will be; and which authorities will be liable to fund them. [203541]

Caroline Flint: The "intensive" elements of the Drug Interventions Programme are currently operational in 66 police Basic Command Units (47 DATs) with high levels of acquisitive crime. In 2005–06 we will expand the "intensive" elements of the Drug Interventions Programme to a further 32 police Basic Command Units. All areas in England and Wales are in receipt of funding for arrest referral schemes and for throughcare and aftercare.

Estimated total funding for the programme in 2004–05 is £188 million. This includes funding transferred to other agencies such as the Probation Service for the management of Drug Treatment and Testing Orders (DTTOs).

Most costs are met by central funding although the success of the Programme depends on the full participation of all agencies.

Ross Cranston: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what impact the Criminal Justice Intervention panels are expected to have on local criminal justice and drug organisations. [203542]

Caroline Flint: The Drug Interventions Programme (formerly CJIP) provides an opportunity for all criminal justice agencies and drug treatment organisations to work together in addressing drug-related crime and the associated treatment needs of offenders. Experience to date indicates that the Programme is working as a catalyst to join up services, plug gaps and address with new vigour the problems that drug misuse can cause in our communities.

Ross Cranston: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what impact the creation of Criminal Justice Intervention panels is expected to have on *(a)* drug-related and *(b)* persistent crime in (i) 2004–05 and (ii) 2005 to 2007. [203543]

Caroline Flint: Precise estimates of the impact of the Drug Interventions Programme on drug-related and persistent crime are not yet available. However, the key aim of the Programme is to get drug-using offenders into treatment as there is a wealth of research evidence to show that treatment reduces both drug use and offending. For example the National Treatment Outcomes Research Study found significant reductions in offending among those entering treatment. Early figures show that around 1,500 offenders a month are now entering treatment as a result of the Programme.

Other early evidence also shows that acquisitive crime is falling faster in Drug Interventions Programme areas than in non-Programme areas.

Ross Cranston: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what change in the number of people accessing drug treatment as a result of Criminal Justice Implementation panel intervention he expects in *(a)* 2004–05 and *(b)* 2005 to 2007. [203545]

Caroline Flint: The Drug Interventions Programme (formerly CJIP) is having a positive impact on drug treatment for all drug users and is acting as a catalyst to improve availability, accessibility, and quality of treatment.

In *(a)* 2004–05: Between April and October 2004 over 7,000 people entered drug treatment through the programme, with 190 per cent. more people entering treatment in October than in April.

In *(b)* 2005 to 2007: We are on track to achieve our ambition of getting 1,000 offenders a week into treatment by 2008 and are currently running ahead of the interim target to get 1,250 offenders per month into treatment by March 2005.

The numbers accessing treatment via the Drug Interventions Programme do not show the full picture. NTA figures show that 154,000 drug users were in treatment in England in 2003–04.

Curfew Orders

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) in what percentage of offenders sentenced to a curfew order a possible violation of the conditions of the order has resulted in a call out; [199954]

(2) how many offenders who have been subject to a curfew order and breached that order have received a custodial sentence; [199959]

(3) how many offenders were the subject of a curfew order in the last 12 months to 1 November. [199960]

Paul Goggins: 9,599 persons were sentenced to a curfew order by the courts in England and Wales in 2003, the latest year for which figures are available.

The following number of persons received sentences of immediate custody following breaches of curfew orders:

	Number of persons received sentences of immediate custody
1997	24
1998	64
1999	83
2000	116
2001	185
2002	240
2003	331

Information on the numbers of possible violations of the conditions of curfew orders that result in a call out is not collected centrally.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department for what *(a)* length of time and *(b)* number of offenders the electronic monitoring kit for home detention curfew orders is used before it is (i) refurbished and (ii) discarded. [200005]

Paul Goggins: The equipment is used and re-used for offenders indefinitely. It is checked at the start of the curfew and every 28 days during the monitoring period. The equipment is also checked when the curfew expires. The battery in the tag is changed every six months and the battery in the monitoring unit is changed every 18 months to two years. When the equipment is damaged it is either repaired or discarded.

Cycling

Mr. Boris Johnson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many cyclists have been prosecuted in each year since 1991 for cycling without due care and attention. [203955]

Caroline Flint: The information contained in the table gives the number of persons proceeded against for "cycling without due care and attention", England and Wales 1991 to 2003.

Number of persons proceeded against for "cycling without due care and attention"[1] *England and Wales 1991 to 2003*

	Proceeded against
1991	89
1992	77
1993	89
1994	100
1995	116
1996	97
1997	127
1998	127
1999	121
2000	94
2001	75
2002	66
2003	77

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis

Departmental Advertising

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many television advertisements his Department has commissioned on *(a)* terrestrial and *(b)* satellite television channels in the last 12 months; and what the cost was in each case. [201307]

Fiona Mactaggart: Television advertisements are generally produced to be used on both terrestrial and satellite channels. Advertising space is purchased on the basis of which media will be most effective at reaching the target audience. In virtually all cases this will involve a mix of satellite and terrestrial channels. For this reason it is not possible to differentiate the spend between terrestrial and satellite advertising.

During 2003–04 the Home Office produced the following television commercials all of which appeared on satellite and terrestrial television. The total media spend is included for each campaign.

Drugs

Frank

Talk about drugs

Worried

Fishing

Swimming

Weatherman

Launderette

Curling

Hugging

Taking over

Total TV media costs—£1,789,953

Internet Safety

Child safety on the internet

Total TV media costs—£707,436

Vehicle Crime

Interview

The Chase

Total TV media spend—£1,899,952

Police Recruitment

Lisa Potts

Lennox Lewis

Special constables

Total TV media spend:

Regulars—£1,020,000

Specials—£1,700,000

Departmental Costs

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what his estimate is of the cost of building refurbishment carried out by his Department in each of the last two years. [200761]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Department does not maintain central records of the cost of every building refurbishment it has carried out and provision of this information would be at disproportionate cost. However for offices in central London and Croydon the approximate expenditure on such projects, which includes elements of maintenance and alterations to house additional staff is as follows:

	£ million
2002–2003	9.2
2003–2004	4.0

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what his estimate is of the cost of *(a)* ministerial cars and drivers and *(b)* taxis for his Department in each of the last two years. [200764]

Fiona Mactaggart: In relation to the financial year 2002–03 I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by the then Minister for the Cabinet Office, my hon. Friend the Member for Paisley, South (Mr. Alexander) on 13 November 2003, *Official Report*, columns 397–98W.

My hon. Friend the Minister for the Cabinet Office has asked Nick Matheson, Chief Executive of the Government Car and Despatch Agency to write to the hon. Member with details of the Ministerial vehicles provided to this Department in 2003–04.

The recorded cost of using taxi's over the last two years are given in the following table.

	£
2002–03	362,905
2003–04	435,416

Travel by taxi is allowed only in the following circumstances:

for journeys for which there is no other suitable method of public transport, or

where heavy luggage has to be transported to or from the place of departure or arrival, or

where the saving of official time is important.

Domestic Violence

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to introduce a general fund for victims of domestic violence. [199971]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 2 December 2004]:* We have no plans to introduce a general fund for victims of domestic violence. We do, however, fund a range of services to benefit victims of domestic violence. This includes over £32.1 million over three years to expand and improve refuges; and £50 million each year to provide housing based support through the Supporting People Fund. We also recently funded the first domestic violence publicity campaign to promote the national freephone helpline. Delivered in partnership by Women's Aid and Refuge, this helpline is run with funding of £1 million from Office of the Deputy Prime Minister matched by £1 million from Comic Relief.

Mr. Soley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* female murder victims have been killed by their partner or husband and *(b)* male murder victims were killed by their partner or wife since 2000. [200926]

Paul Goggins: The latest available information on homicide is published in Home Office Statistical Bulletin number 01/04, "Crime in England and Wales 2002/2003: Supplementary Volume 1: Homicide and Gun Crime". Table 1.05 provides data on victims killed by their partner/ex-partner as given in the following table:

England and Wales

	Female victim	Male victim
1999–2000	88	24
2000–01	98	25
2001–02	120	30
2002–03	107	33
Total	413	112

Note:

Figures are as at 13 November 2003 and are subject to revision as cases are dealt with by the police, by the courts or as further information becomes available.

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he is taking to ensure that an appropriate amount of money goes to local women's refuge organisations and other domestic violence support services working with children affected by domestic violence under Section 50 of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004. [206034]

Margaret Hodge: I have been asked to reply.

Through the Safeguard Children and Supporting Families grants and other funding streams, the Department for Education and Skills provides funding for voluntary organisations, such as women's refuges.

Furthermore, as part of a package of support for families affected by domestic violence, local authorities can provide funds from the Government's Supporting People programme, to fund housing-related support. Services for children are not funded directly by Supporting People. Supporting People funding does not cover under 16s as they would not be expected to manage their own accommodation. Services for under 16s are provided in satisfaction of a statutory duty and these duties are specifically excluded from Supporting People funding. Other services for under 16s are provided by local authority Social Services departments.

The funding that local authorities have allocated for domestic violence services from their Supporting People budgets in 2004–05 is £56,964,000. There is no breakdown of specific amounts allocated to children's services as the funds would be directed towards adult family heads.

It is for local authorities to decide how best to provide support and services for all children in need in its locale, including those children affected by domestic violence. There is no current specific earmarked funding for services of this nature. Instead, Government funding is allocated to Councils with social services responsibilities on the basis of the needs of their populations. A weighted capitation formula is used to determine each body's target fair share of available resources. It is, therefore, for Councils, working in partnership with relevant local stakeholders, to determine their spending priorities on the basis of local needs.

Drink Spiking

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of drink spiking detection and prevention devices; and if he will make a statement. [199968]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 2 December 2004]:* The Home Office is aware of a number of products, both in development and on the market, that claim to provide a partial or whole solution to the problem of drink-spiking. The list of substances that can be used to spike drinks is almost endless, with any substance that may have a sedative effect being a possible candidate. While drugs like Rohypnol and GHB (Gammahydroxybutyrate) have received wide publicity, they are rarely found in samples. As a result, products which allow the user to test drinks for certain illicit substances, may provide a potentially dangerous false reassurance.

While bottle caps and drinks holders may reduce the potential for drink spiking, they too can provide a false reassurance of safety, given evidence that it is the consumption of alcohol, rather than drink spiking, which more commonly increases vulnerability to sexual crime (please refer to answer given to questions 199964/6/7 regarding FSS research on this). The Government therefore urge the public to treat such products with caution. The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) has in the past commissioned research to look at the viability of a potential drug detecting device, such as a swizzle stick, that could be unobtrusively used by people in pubs and clubs to detect drugs in drinks. Due to the difficulty of producing a satisfactory device, the project is not being continued.

A message of safer and more responsible drinking, alongside increased awareness and vigilance upon the part of friends and staff, will be most effective in increasing the safety of people who feel they are vulnerable to drink-spiking. The Home Office issues guidance to licensed premises on how to deal with the effects of drug use on their premises, which is in the process of being revised. The updated version will include a section on drug assisted sexual assault.

Drug Interventions Programme

Stephen Hesford: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the Drug Interventions Programme. [205235]

Caroline Flint: The Drug Interventions Programme (formerly Criminal Justice Interventions Programme) is a critical part of the Government's national strategy for tackling drugs. The programme aims to make the most of opportunities provided by the criminal justice system to get drug misusing offenders out of crime and into treatment.

The "intensive" elements of the Drug Interventions Programme are currently operational in 66 police basic command units (47 DATs) with high levels of acquisitive crime. In 2005–06 we will expand the intensive elements of the programme to a further 32 basic command units. These elements include testing for Class A drugs following charge for certain offences and in a number of areas restriction on court bail for those who have tested positive.

The programme will be enhanced by measures to be included in the Drugs Bill, introduced to Parliament on 16 December 2004.

Early evidence shows that acquisitive crime is falling faster in Drug Interventions Programme areas than in non-programme areas.

Dungavel Detention Centre

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many children have been detained in the family accommodation at Dungavel Detention Centre in each month since its re-opening. [206018]

Mr. Browne: Following the disturbance at Harmondsworth Immigration Removal Centre in July it was necessary, for a short time, to use the family accommodation at Dungavel for single male detainees. The family accommodation at Dungavel is no longer being used for this purpose and families are being detained there as appropriate. Children and infants are detained as part of family groups whose detention is considered necessary, most often just prior to their removal and usually just for a few days.

Information on the total number of children detained under Immigration Act powers in each month is not available. Official statistics on immigration detainees are produced on a snap-shot basis. On 25 September 2004, 40 children were detained solely under Immigration Act powers in the United Kingdom, however none of these were held at Dungavel Immigration Removal Centre.

Information on the number of people detained solely under Immigration Act powers as at 25 December 2004 will be published on the Home Office web-site on 22 February 2005. www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1 .html

E-mails

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what his Department's policy is in relation to the storage and deletion of e-mails; and whether this policy has been reviewed in the past 12 months. [206742]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Department continues to implement well established policies and procedures for the review and disposal of files in accordance with its administrative needs and the Public Records Act

E-mail messages that form part of the official record are saved for as long as business needs require and stored corporately in accordance with departmental record management procedures. Further e-mail guidance is available on the National Archives website at: http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/electronicrecords/advice/pdf/managing_emails.pdf.

Departmental policies are kept under review and this is the case for all record management policies. There has been no change to policies over the last 12 months. They continue to treat e-mails as one of the many document types containing business information and so they are used as part of the business record accordingly.

Escaped Prisoners

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department for what offences prisoners who absconded in 2004 from open prisons were serving custodial sentences. [205627]

Paul Goggins *[holing answer 20 December 2004]:* From 1 January this year to date there have been 934 absconds from open and semi-open prisons. Information about each prisoner's offence could not be obtained except at disproportionate cost.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners have escaped from each prison in each of the last five years; and how many have not been recaptured. [205630]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 20 December 2004]:* The information requested is set out in the table.

Totals

Financial year	*Total escapes from establishments*	*Total recaptured*	*Total KPI escapes*
1999–2000	30	29	30
2000–01	13	13	11
2001–02	17	16	15
2002–03	5	4	5
2003–04	11	10	10

Financial year 1999–2000

Establishment	*Total escapes*	*Total recaptured*	*Total KPI*
Pare	1	1	1
Stocken	1	1	1
Hollesley Bay	3	3	3
Littlehey	1	0	1
The Mount	1	1	1
Rochester	3	3	3
Haverigg	1	1	1
Liverpool	1	1	1
Risley	1	1	1
Styal	4	4	4
Thorn Cross	1	1	1
Deerbolt	2	2	2
Huntercombe	1	1	1
Featherstone	1	1	1
Lindholme	8	8	8
Total	30	29	30

Financial year 2000–01

Establishment	*Total escapes*	*Total recaptured*	*Total KPI*
Guys Marsh	1	1	1
Erlestoke	4	4	2
Blantyre House	1	1	1
Portland	2	2	2
Risley	1	1	1
Brinsford	1	1	1
Downview	1	1	1
Kirklevington	1	1	1
Lancaster	1	1	1
Total	13	13	11

Financial year 2001–02

Establishment	*Total escapes*	*Total recaptured*	*Total KPI*
Norwich	1	1	1
The Verne	1	1	1
Erlestoke	1	1	1
Winchester	1	1	1
Grendon	3	3	3

Financial year 2001–02

Establishment	*Total escapes*	*Total recaptured*	*Total KPI*
Lindholme	3	2	1
Wealstun	1	1	1
Feltham	1	1	1
Guys Marsh	3	3	3
Rye Hill	2	2	2
Total	17	16	15

Financial year 2002–03

Establishment	*Total escapes*	*Total recaptured*	*Total KPI*
Brixton	1	0	1
Norwich	1	1	1
Cardiff	1	1	1
Littlehey	1	1	1
The Weare	[illegible]	1	1
Total	[illegible]	4	5

Financial year 2003–04

Establishment	*Total escapes*	*Total recaptured*	*Total KPI*
Brinsford	4	4	4
Bullingdon	1	1	1
Dartmoor	3	3	2
Lindholme	1	1	1
Leicester	1	1	1
Parc	1	0	1
Total	11	10	10

Financial year 2004–05

Establishment	*Total escapes*	*Total recaptured*	*Total KPI escapes*
Haverigg	2	2	2
The Verne	3	3	3
Pentonville	1	1	1
Werrington	1	1	1
Stafford	3	2	3
Total	10	9	10

Female Prisoners

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on resources made available by the Government to families looking after the children of women in prison. [206282]

Margaret Hodge: I have been asked to reply.

Lone fathers or others with formal care responsibilities for such children can access the full range of provision available to support children's well-being, regardless of the reason why the mother is absent from the family. These include universal benefits and services, such as child benefit and Sure Start; discretionary payments such as child tax credit; and targeted social services provision based on individual assessments of the children's needs by the relevant local authority.

DfES is formally committed to working with the Home Office and NOMS on supporting stable family links between prisoners and their partners and children, as part of the Government's action to reduce re-offending.

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of mothers in prison were first-time offenders in each year since 1997. [206284]

Paul Goggins: The requested information is not recorded centrally.

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of female prisoners who gave birth in prison were subsequently reunited with their child in the last period for which figures are available. [206290]

Paul Goggins: The information requested is not available.

The Prison Service does not keep records of reunions of mothers and children in the community. All pregnant prisoners who give birth to a baby while serving a prison sentence do so in a local hospital. Some of those mothers will be able to keep the baby with them in a Prison Service Mother and Baby Unit, while others will choose to leave their infant in the care of relatives or other carers, which is likely to result in a reunification of mother and baby. In other cases, babies may be taken into the care of foster carers and Social Services on a temporary basis. The outcome in those cases depends on the decisions of Social Services and the Family Courts.

Firearms

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department in how many criminal incidents it was reported that firearms had been used in *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* 2003; and in how many of those incidents the use of handguns was reported. [199534]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 29 November 2004]*: The available information is given in the table. Because of changes in reporting and recording practices, the data for the two years are not directly comparable.

Crimes recorded by police in England and Wales in which firearms were reported to have been used

Financial year	*Crimes in which firearms were used (including air weapons)*	*Crimes in which handguns were used*
1997–98	12,805	2,636
2003–04[1]	24,094	5,144

[1] Figures are provisional

Note:

1. There was a change in counting rules for recorded crime on 1 April 1998

2. The National Crime Recording Standard was introduced on 1 April 2002. Figures for some crime categories from this date may have been inflated by this.

Freedom of Information

Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many staff in his Department were employed to deal with Freedom of Information Act 2000 issues in *(a)* 2001, *(b)* 2002, *(c)* 2003 and *(d)* 2004; and how many staff are budgeted to deal with Freedom of Information Act 2000 issues in (i) 2005 and (ii) 2006. [205044]

Fiona Mactaggart: Managing records and handling requests for information is part of the work carried out by all officials. There are, in addition, a small number dedicated to handling information requests whether under the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information or the Data Protection Act. This centre of expertise has also been making preparations for the onset of the Freedom of Information access responsibilities that commence in January 2005 and will then concentrate on handling incoming cases.

Numbers provided are for staff leading on Information Access (including FOI) issues but do not include staff dealing with routine information requests received across the department. Where peaks of activity resulted in fluctuating numbers of staff within specific years the maximum number of staff has been cited.

(a) 2001 = 4, *(b)* 2002 = 6, *(c)* 2003 = 7, *(d)* 2004 = 25.5. Future staffing requirements will be reviewed in 2005 in the light of experience. This will depend on: the number of requests for information received; the complexity of requests, and the number of appeals received. Staff numbers for 2005 are provisional at this stage and are again for staff leading on all Information Access (including FOI) issues. Predictions for 2006 will be made later in 2005.

(i) 2005 = 29.5, (ii) 2006 = to be reviewed.

Generic Sentences

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what additional funding will be available for financial year 2005–06 to the Probation Service for the introduction of generic sentences. [205685]

Paul Goggins: The budget for the National Probation Service has not yet been set for 2005–06 so it is not yet possible to say how much will be allocated for the generic community sentence.

Halliday Report

Mr. Byrne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to publish the final conclusions of the Halliday Report on sentencing reform. [200256]

Paul Goggins: The Halliday Report ("Making Punishments Work"), which reviewed the sentencing framework of England and Wales, was published in July 2001. The report recognised the need for widespread changes to the sentencing structure. The Government's response was set out in the 2002 White Paper "Justice for All". The Criminal Justice Act 2003 made radical changes to the sentencing framework based heavily on Halliday's recommendations.

HMP Holloway

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many female prisoners, held in HM Holloway prison, have *(a)* attempted suicide and *(b)* committed suicide in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement. [201853]

Paul Goggins: The reasons why people self-injure is complex, and it is difficult to distinguish between acts of self-harm that were attempts at ending life, and those which occurred for other reasons. It is not possible, therefore, for the Prison Service to determine from recorded incidents of self-harm those acts that could be described as attempts at suicide. The following figures for self-harm include all acts of self-harm, however serious.

HMP Holloway

	Number of self-inflicted deaths[1]	*Number of recorded incidents of self-harm*[2]
1999	2	122
2000	1	245
2001	1	604
2002	1	907
2003	0	[3]958

[1] The Prison Service employs the term "self-inflicted death' rather than suicide. This includes all those deaths where it appears the person acted intentionally to take his/her own life.

[2] These figures record the number of incidents of self-harm, not the number of individuals. Some individuals repeatedly self-harm.

[3] In December 2002, a new form for reporting self-injury (the F213SH) was introduced across the prisons estate in England and Wales, which is known to have improved reporting practices. Please note therefore that much of the increase in reported self-harm in 2003 may result from the change in reporting procedures rather than reflect an actual increase in incidence of self-harm.

Up to 2 December 2004, there have been two apparently self-inflicted deaths at Holloway; up to the end of September, 725 incidents of self-harm were reported at the establishment.

The prison population, and the female prison population in particular, includes a large number of individuals with a combination of psychiatric disorders, alcohol and drug dependency, family background and relationship problems, histories of self-harm and previous abuse, all of which raise their risk of suicide and self-harm. A targeted and separate suicide prevention and self-harm management strategy is being developed for women prisoners.

Holloway has a First Night in Custody Project that focuses on the needs of women at the vulnerable stage of entry into prison. The Project was established in October 2000 and is run by the Prisoner Advice and Care Trust. It employs a full-time project worker and two link workers to help identify women at risk of self-harm or suicide. The project sees over 100 prisoners a month and makes referrals to services in and outside the prison on housing needs, mental health problems, drug or alcohol problems.

Holloway is also piloting Dialectical Behaviour Therapy, an innovative programme developed for women with "borderline personality disorder" who also self-harm or engage in suicidal behaviours.

Home Detention Curfews

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many persons were recalled to custody having been released on home detention curfew in *(a)* each of the last 12 months and *(b)* each of the last five years. [203516]

Paul Goggins: Prisoners who are subject to the Home Detention Curfew scheme can have their licences revoked under the powers available to the Secretary of State provided in sections 38A(1) and 39 of the Criminal Justice Act 1991. The reasons for revocation are as follows:

breach of the curfew (section 38A(1)*(a)* of the Criminal Justice Act 1991) the prisoner has not breached the curfew, but whereabouts could no longer be electronically monitored—invariably because of a loss of address (section 38A(1)*(b)* of the Criminal Justice Act 1991)

it was necessary to protect the public from serious harm (section 38A(1)*(c)* of the Criminal Justice Act 1991)

the curfewee had committed an offence or breached any other requirement of probation supervision (section 39 of the Criminal Justice Act 1991). Curfewees who are charged with a new offence may also be recalled on any of the preceding grounds depending upon the circumstances of the case.

The table gives a breakdown of the number of prisoners who have been recalled to prison while subject to the Home Detention Curfew scheme over the past five years and a monthly breakdown for the past 12 months. The total figure is broken down into the various categories of recall as set out previously and includes those prisoners who have not breached the conditions of their licence, but whose whereabouts can no longer be electronically monitored following a change in their circumstances.

The increase in the number of recalls is an expected consequence of expanding the Home Detention Curfew scheme. Of the 100,345 prisoners placed on the scheme since January 1999, a total of 8,698 have had their licences revoked, which represents 8.7 per cent. of the total.

These statistics are based on information recorded on the central Prison Service IT system at week ending 24 October 2004. Further updates and amendments may be made to records on this system in future, resulting in revised figures.

Recalls

	Breach of curfew	*Inability to monitor*	*Risk of serious harm*	*Breach of probation supervision/ charged with further offence*	*Total recalls*
1999	484	201	7	10	702
2000	473	215	4	80	772
2001	362	190	0	118	670
2002	808	392	1	274	1,475
2003	1,473	705	0	538	2,716
January to September 2004	1,332	538	0	493	2,363
Total	4,932	2,241	12	1,513	8,698
October 2003	162	70	0	63	295
November 2003	122	58	0	49	229
December 2003	147	66	0	52	265
January 2004	160	61	0	63	284
February 2004	141	61	0	48	250
March 2004	134	62	0	63	259
April 2004	157	54	0	49	260
May 2004	152	70	0	54	276
June 2004	140	53	0	54	247
July 2004	156	73	0	60	289
August 2004	160	45	0	61	266
September 2004	132	59	0	41	232

Hostels

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether there has been a review of the Anglia Water contract for hostel facilities. [202686]

Paul Goggins: There has been no formal review of the contract, though performance and quality of service levels are routinely assessed and elements are subject to routine audit requirements. The overall programme for in-house and the contracted provision of commercial and approved premises is subject to the Gateway Review process.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many complaints have been received about the Anglia Water contract for hostel facilities from those hostels, broken down by category of complaint. [202687]

Paul Goggins: There were 1,853 complaints in the 18 months between April 2003 and September 2004. The complaints were categorised as follows:

Category	*18 months total per category*
Mechanical and electrical	1,011
Buildings	260
Catering	264
Cleaning	172
Security	7
Other	139
Total	1,853

Identity Cards

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will place in the Library copies of the public opinion research conducted by *(a)* TNS Consumer and *(b)* Cragg Ross Dawson into identity cards. [201848]

Mr. Browne: The findings of all research conducted by the Identity Cards programme have been published. Summaries of both pieces of research were included in Cm 6358 "A Summary of Findings from the Consultation on Legislation on Identity Cards" (October 2004). Copies of the public opinion research carried out by TNS Consumer and Cragg Ross Dawson will be placed in the Library.

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which categories of individual will be entitled to pay *(a)* a reduced fee and *(b)* no fee for an identity card; and if he will make a statement. [201577]

Mr. Browne *[holding answer 2 December 2004]:* The Identity Cards Bill introduced into Parliament on 29 November includes powers to set different levels of fees for identity cards for different circumstances. The Government have said that groups which may benefit from this flexibility include 16 year olds, those on reduced incomes or those who have been in retirement for some time. The final decision on the fee structure and levels of fees will be for Parliament under the powers in clause 37 of the Bill.

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he plans to increase the level of charges to individuals for identity cards if the outturn cost of the identity card computer system exceeds his current expectations. [201578]

Mr. Browne *[holding answer 2 December 2004]:* Clause 37 of the Identity Cards Bill introduced to Parliament on 29 November 2004 includes powers to set fees to recover the costs of the scheme. Some of these fees would apply to individual card holders and some to organisations using the verification service. The Government's intention is that the total fee income from all these sources will cover the running costs of the scheme, though clause 37 does not make this a legal requirement.

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to reduce charges for identity cards for those individuals who do not hold a driving licence and who do not hold a passport. [201579]

Mr. Browne *[holding answer 2 December 2004]:* Clause 37 of the Identity Cards Bill introduced to Parliament on 29 November 2004 includes powers to set fees for identity cards issued alongside designated documents (such as a passport) and for identity cards issued on their own. The Government believes that most people will obtain an identity card in conjunction with a passport and an estimate of this charge was published in the Regulatory Impact Assessment which was published alongside the Bill. Much of this cost would also be incurred in issuing an identity card on its own to a person who did not hold a biometric passport.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the identity card will replace the Application Registration Card. [203483]

Mr. Browne: There are no plans to replace the Application Registration Card (ARC) with the identity card. The ARC and its associated database provides a secure record of a person's claim for asylum and because of the use of biometric information this means that a person cannot make multiple applications using different identities. The ARC does not prove identity.

When the identity cards scheme is operational, a person whose asylum application was approved—and whose identity had therefore been validated—could then be issued with a new biometric residence permit card linked to a record on the National Identity Register. The use of biometric information would ensure that a person could not create one "identity" via the asylum system and another via the identity cards scheme.

Although there are no plans for the ARC to be a designated document within the terms of the Identity Cards legislation, this would not rule out the possibility that the ARC scheme and the Identity Cards programme might share some common infrastructure.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the research programme of the Identity Cards programme team. [203031]

Mr. Browne: Both quantitative and qualitative research on the public's views on identity cards has been conducted since the start of the first consultation exercise in July 2002. This also included specific research on the views of people from minority ethnic groups. The findings of all research completed to date have been published at www.identitycards.gov.uk

Research which is currently not ready for publication consists of qualitative research on the public's views on the process of how ID cards will be issued and used and qualitative research to identify the special needs of particular groups which need to be incorporated into the design of the scheme, for example ensuring that the enrolment facilities can be used by people with disabilities.

Research which is planned but not yet commissioned will also be undertaken in early 2005 on how passport holders' will react to the new processes for issuing more secure passports and later ID cards. For example, will this encourage them to renew their passport earlier than planned? Quantitative research will also be undertaken as part of regular surveys on broader Home Office issues.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many private sector *(a)* secondees and *(b)* consultants are employed by the Identity Cards Programme Team, broken down by company. [203033]

Mr. Browne: On 1 December 2004, the Identity Cards Programme employed *(a)* one private sector secondee from Shreeveport Management Consultancy and *(b)* 40 consultants from PA Consulting Group Ltd.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* staff from his Department, *(b)* staff from other Departments and *(c)* private sector secondees are employed in the development of the Identity Cards Programme. [203034]

Mr. Browne: As of 1 December 2004, the Identity Cards Programme employed *(a)* 39 civil servants, *(b)* two secondees from other public sector organisations—one from the Metropolitan Police Service and one from the UK Passport Service and *(c)* one private sector secondee from Shreeveport Management Consultants.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the external consultants which have carried out work as part of the Identity Cards Programme. [203035]

Mr. Browne: The Identity Cards Programme has received consultancy services from the following organisations: Axon Group; Cornwell Management Consultants; PA Consulting Services Ltd.; SchlumbergerSema (now known-as Atos Origin); Shreeveport Management Consultancy; Sirius Consortium

Additionally the programme has received consultancy advice from the following Government sources: Communications Electronic Security Group (GCHQ); Office of Government Commerce; Partnerships UK plc; UK Passport Service.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of *(a)* the number of identity cards that will have to be reissued each year to accommodate a change of address by the holder and *(b)* the number of identity cards that may be lost or stolen each year; and what estimate he has made of the charge for reissuing an identity card to the holder in each circumstance. [203487]

Mr. Browne: The estimates used by the Identity Cards programme are: *(a)* 14 per cent. of card holders in any given year will change address. Change of address will not necessarily require a replacement card. 0.5 per cent. of card holders will require a replacement card due to change of name or other personal detail shown on the face of the card; *(b)* 2 per cent. of those enrolled in any given year will need a replacement due to their card being lost, stolen or damaged; *(c)* no decision has been taken on whether to charge for reissuing cards in these circumstances.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of *(a)* the number of identity cards issued each year which may contain erroneous information, *(b)* the number of centres required for the registering of biometric details of British citizens requiring an ID card and *(c)* the annual cost of maintaining each such centre. [203488]

Mr. Browne: No estimate has been made of the number of ID cards that will be issued each year with erroneous information. Our current best estimate is that between 70 and 100 offices of various sizes will be required to register biometric details for both biometric passports and ID cards. In addition to fixed sites, we are assessing how cost effective it will be to use mobile enrolment centres to provide increased coverage. The estimate of the annual cost of maintaining such centres is included in the running cost figures quoted in the Regulatory Impact Assessment which was published when the Bill was introduced. The estimate of the proportion attributable to the cost of enrolment centres has not been placed in the public domain for reasons of commercial confidentiality.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the number of people likely to be prosecuted each year for failing *(a)* to register with the National Identity Register (NIR), *(b)* to renew an identity card and *(c)* to supply amended details to the NIR. [203489]

Mr. Browne: There will be no prosecutions for failing *(a)* to register with the National Identity Register (NIR), *(b)* to renew an ID card and *(c)* to supply amended details to the NIR. Each of these requirements will be enforced via civil penalties.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the likely fees to be charged for *(a)* the modification of identity cards, *(b)* making or modifying entries on identity cards, *(c)* the issue of identity cards, *(d)* applications for provision of information contained on the Information Register, *(e)* provision of information from the Information Register, *(f)* applications for confirmation of information recorded on the Information Register, *(g)* the issue or refusal of such a confirmation of information from the Information Register, *(h)* applications for the approval of a person or apparatus (the accreditation) and *(i)* the grant of such approvals. [203524]

Mr. Browne: The best current estimate of the fee for a combined package of a 10-year passport and ID card is £85. The charges for the other services described in the question are subject to future policy decisions on charging and further work on demand and volumes. While the Identity Cards Bill, which was introduced to Parliament on 29 November 2004, provides powers to charge for such services there is no automatic presumption that charges will apply in all of these circumstances.

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what plans he has under his scheme to introduce identity cards and a national database to record and check the identities of third country nationals who enter the United Kingdom via the border with Northern Ireland; [204524]

(2) what assessment he has made of the implications for the British/Irish Common Travel Area of his proposed scheme for identity cards and a national database. [204527]

Mr. Browne *[holding answer 13 December 2004]*: The principle of the Common Travel Area will be unchanged by the introduction of identity cards. All third country nationals who have permission to stay in the UK for more than three months, irrespective of their point of entry, will be required to enrol on the register at the three month point.

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on how Irish citizens who are *(a)* resident in and *(b)* visiting the United Kingdom would be affected by his proposed national identity card and database. [204525]

Mr. Browne *[holding answer 13 December 2004]*: The identity cards scheme will apply to all British nationals resident in the UK and to all foreign nationals resident for more than three months. The status of Irish nationals, under existing arrangements (including EU free movement legislation for those who wish to be considered as EU nationals) will be unaffected by these proposals.

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what discussions he has had with his Irish counterpart about the proposals for a national identity card and database; and if he will make a statement. [204526]

Mr. Browne *[holding answer 13 December 2004]*: There have been contacts at both ministerial and official level between the UK and Irish Governments since the proposals were first under consideration.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of *(a)* the number of employees additional to his Department's current complement required to run the National Identity Register (NIR) and *(b)* the annual salary bill of the employees of the NIR. [203484]

Mr. Browne: At this stage in the planning for the scheme it is too early to determine the split of staff between civil servants and private sector staff.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what additional office accommodation will be required to house the employees of the National Identity Register; and what estimate he has made of the cost of such additional accommodation. [203485]

Mr. Browne: Additional accommodation will be required for the biometric enrolment centres, some will be permanent, other accommodation will be temporary for mobile centres. Work is under way within the Identity Cards programme to determine the extent to which current Government accommodation can be used by the Identity Cards Programme. The cost assumptions and cost estimates that are being used pending completion of this work have not been placed in the public domain for reasons of commercial confidentiality but the cost is covered within the estimates published in the Regulatory Impact Assessment.

Identity Cards (Scotland)

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what discussions he has had with the First Minister of Scotland with regard to identity cards. [204609]

Mr. Browne: My right hon. Friend the Home Secretary has consulted the First Minister throughout the development of policy on identity cards. Both the draft Bill published earlier this year and the Identity Cards Bill which was introduced to Parliament on 29 November 2004 make clear the rights of the Westminster Parliament to legislate for the introduction of identity cards throughout the United Kingdom but to leave decisions on how they are used by public services for which the Scottish Parliament is responsible to that Parliament.

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the provisions for introduction of identity cards in Scotland will be the same as for the rest of the United Kingdom. [204677]

Mr. Browne: The Identity Cards Bill applies to the whole of the United Kingdom. This includes provision for the registration for identity cards, including the power to make it a requirement to register, to apply throughout the UK.

The Bill also allows for required identity checks regulations to be made for public services that are within the competence of the Westminster Parliament. Regulations for public services that fall within the legislative competence of the Scottish Parliament will be a matter for that Parliament.

Identity Fraud

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the extent of identity fraud in *(a)* the UK, *(b)* France, *(c)* Germany, *(d)* Spain and *(e)* Sweden. [203533]

Mr. Browne: It is not a criminal offence for a person simply to use another identity, but false identities are used often to facilitate other offences such as deception and money laundering. The police do not record incidents of identity fraud because prosecutions are recorded for the offences facilitated by false identities. However, a Cabinet Office study published in 2002 estimated the cost of identity fraud in the UK to be £1.3 billion. No estimate has been by the Home Office of the extent of identity fraud in France, Germany, Spain or Sweden.

Illegal Workers

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prosecutions have been carried out against employers for employing illegal workers in each year since 1993. [203482]

Mr. Browne: The latest available information on the number of persons proceeded against and those found guilty under section 8 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1996 is shown in the table.

Number of persons proceeded against and those found guilty of offences under section 8 of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996, England and Wales 1997 to 2003

Offence description[1]	*Statute*	*Year*	*Persons*[1] *proceeded against*	*Persons*[1] *found guilty*
Employing a person subject to immigration control who has attained the age of 16.	Asylum and Immigration Act 1996 1997 section 8. 1998	1997	[2]—	[2]—
		1998	1	1
—	—	1999	4	1
—	—	2000	10	4
—	—	2001	5	1
—	—	2002	2	1
—		[3]2003	2	1

[1] Principal immigration offence

[2] Not applicable

[3] Provisional figures

Section 8 of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996 first introduced the offence of employing illegal migrant workers and it came into force on 27 January 1997. No figures are therefore available for the years prior to this date.

Immigration

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many applications for exceptional leave to remain in 2003 were determined *(a)* within one month of the date of application, *(b)* within two to six months, *(c)* within seven to 12 months, *(d)* within 13 to 24 months and *(e)* not within 24 months. [202980]

Mr. Browne: 7,210 initial asylum decisions were granted Exceptional Leave to Remain (ELR), Humanitarian Protection (HP) or Discretionary Leave (DL)[1] in 2003. The table shows the time taken for these initial decisions.

[1] Humanitarian Protection (HP) and Discretionary Leave (DL) replaced Exceptional Leave to Remain (ELR) from 1 April 2003.

Grants of ELR, HP or DL in 2003 by time taken to initial decision[1]

Length to time to initial decision for ELR, HP or DL in 2003	*Percentage*
29 days or less	11
One month to less than two months	55
Two months to less than six months	19
Six months to less than one year	8
One year to less than two years	3
Two years or more	5

[1] Figures are provisional.

82 per cent. of applications (excluding withdrawals and third country cases) received in 2003–04 (April 2003 to March 2004) had initial decisions reached and served within two months. This exceeded the Government's target of 75 per cent. for 2003–04.

Information on asylum initial decisions and timeliness of initial decisions are published quarterly on the Home Office website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html.

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what response he proposes to make to the House of Lords judgment of 8 December in connection with discrimination by the immigration service against Roma people intending to travel to the UK from the Czech Republic; and what instructions he has issued to discontinue such practices. [204842]

Mr. Browne: Although the judgment found that Immigration Officers operating pre-clearance at Prague airport in 2001 had discriminated against Roma people, it also found that they were not in breach of international law in refusing passengers entry to claim asylum. The scheme was operated two years ago as a short-term response to a high level of immigration abuse by passengers travelling from Prague. It was always intended that the pre-clearance arrangements would be operated in a non- discriminatory manner in relation to ethnic or national origin.

We will be studying the judgment carefully for any implications it may have as to our future operations, but it is important to note that this case relates specifically to immigration controls no longer in operation following the accession of the Czech Republic to the European Union.

Immigration Officials

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* immigration and *(b)* security officials have been based at each major port of entry to the United Kingdom in each year since 1997. [203528]

Mr. Browne: *(a)* The number of immigration officials working at the major ports of entry to the UK since 1997 are set out in the table:

—	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
Heathrow	[1]618	900.3	841	836.3	832.3	925.5	1005	1040.4
Gatwick	[2]—	317.8	336	379.9	376.1	427.6	434.1	406.3
Dover	[1]255	[1]309.5	[1]308.9	[1]338.3	396.3	491.3	709.3	898.6
Stansted	[1]47.8	57.8	53.8	58	59.3	62.6	73.8	90.2
Manchester	[2]—	[2]—	84.1	86.1	86.9	97.6	74.2	90.2
Birmingham	[2]—	[1]25	38	37.8	45.6	45.8	44.7	49.9
Waterloo	[2]—	124	118.8	116.7	104.1	137.2	163.6	119.8

[1] Complete figures are not available

[2] No figures available for this year

"Immigration officials" is taken to mean staff employed in the following grades: assistant immigration officer, immigration officer, chief immigration officer and immigration inspector.

(b) The deployment of security personnel is a matter for individual airports and maritime ports of entry into the UK and as such information about the number of security staff they employ is not held centrally. Government inspectors with responsibility for transport security work closely with industry to ensure that they have the necessary protective security measures.

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many investigative officers from the Immigration Service work *(a)* full-time and *(b)* part-time within Scotland. [200980]

Mr. Browne *[holding answer 30 November 2004]*: There are 43 Immigration Service officers currently undertaking enforcement duties in Scotland. Of these two are part-time workers. In addition there are 11 Immigration Service officers working alongside four dedicated police officers in the Immigration Service's Intelligence Unit in Scotland. This figure is projected to rise to 17 shortly.

Although enforcement officers in the Immigration Service investigate immigration offences, the police currently take prosecutions against immigration offenders through the Scottish courts working closely with immigration officials in Local Enforcement Offices in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Aberdeen. The Immigration Service is currently reviewing its criminal investigation capabilities and the role that the police play in them. This will include a review of the arrangements currently in place in Scotland.

Immigration Removals

Mr. Malins: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many persons removed under immigration legislation to other countries have been returned to the UK by those countries in the last 12 months for which figures are available; what action was then taken in respect of each case; what safeguards are in place *(a)* to monitor the actions of escorting officers and *(b)* to prevent abuse by them of those they are escorting; how many reports have been received about incidences of abuse; and if he will make a statement. [203550]

Mr. Browne: In the last 12 months a total of 12 individuals removed under immigration legislation have been returned to the UK.

Responsibility for each case is taken by the port of arrival in the UK in conjunction with the removing office. Cases are examined on an individual basis and the course of action is subsequently determined.

The Contractors responsible for escorting of detainees are subject to oversight by Contract Monitors. The Monitors oversee the work on routine visits to ports and removal centres, and also attend contractors training courses to ensure appropriate training is provided. All incidents involving use of force are recorded and examined by the Contract Monitor. Any allegations of improper treatment is subject to investigation, and where this involves any alleged assault this will be referred to the police for a separate investigation.

During 2004 to date there have been 71 allegations of improper treatment made by detainees.

IND Case

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when officials at the Immigration and Nationality Directorate will reply to letters from the hon. Member for Vauxhall dated 9 March and 18 October, about a constituent, reference number: N1006256. [203537]

Mr. Browne: I wrote to my hon. Friend on 6 January.

Initiatives (Funding)

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what budget has been allocated to the Home Office Accounting and Finance Unit in each of the last two years; and how many staff have been employed by the Unit in each year. [201895]

Fiona Mactaggart: In the financial year 2003–04, the Home Office Accounting and Finance Unit spent £3.5 million and employed 106 staff. The budget for 2004–05 is £2.569 million and 73 staff are employed.

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what budget has been allocated to the National Criminal Justice Board in each of the last two years; and how many staff have been employed by the Board. [201896]

Fiona Mactaggart: The National Criminal Justice Board is not an organisation with a budget employing staff. It is an advisory body formed of the Criminal Justice System Ministers, permanent secretaries and agency heads.

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what budget has been allocated to the National Asylum Support Service in each of the last two years; and how many staff have been employed by the Service in each year. [201897]

Fiona Mactaggart: The information requested is in the following table:

Financial year	*£ million*	*Head count*
Outturn 2003–04	1,062	1192
Budget 2004–05	793	1,217

Internet Pornography

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent meetings he has had with *(a)* the police, *(b)* internet service providers, *(c)* overseas crime enforcement agencies and *(d)* others on violent internet pornography; and if he will make a statement. [202239]

Paul Goggins: In considering what action can be taken in respect of extreme pornographic material accessed on the internet, Home Office officials have had discussions with the police, prosecutors and others over the last six months. The matter has also been considered by sub-groups of the Home Secretary's Task Force on Child Protection on the Internet.

Invoice Payments

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average length of time was between the date of invoices issued to his Department from a supplier and payment by the Department of the invoice in the last 12 months for which figures are available; what percentage of these invoices were paid within 30 days of the date of issue of the invoice; what percentage of these invoices remained unpaid after 90 days; and if he will make a statement on the Department's policy on the payment of invoices issued to it. [200622]

Fiona Mactaggart: The information requested is set out in the table:

Payment performance for 2003–04

	Total invoices	*On time*	*31 to 60 days*	*61 to 89 days*	*90+ days*
1st Quarter	55,461	40,636	11,517	1,848	1,460
2nd Quarter	56,696	44,560	8,865	1,561	1,710
3rd Quarter	57,005	46,725	7,729	1,203	1,348
4th Quarter	62,798	50,082	9,367	1,590	1,759
Total	231,960	182,003	37,478	6,202	6,277
Percentage	100.00	78.46	16.16	2.67	2.70

The Home Office payment policy is to pay invoices within 30 days of receipt and agreement of a valid invoice properly supported with proof of delivery of the goods, services and works requested. The Home Office is a signatory to the Better Payment Practice Code. The Department's payment performance is reported in its annual report.

Jesline Chikuku

Sir Teddy Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will reach a decision on the case of Jesline Chikuku of Valkyrie Road, Southend, reference C1070991—DMC. [203575]

Mr. Browne *[holding answer 9 December 2004]:* The Immigration and Nationality Directorate is currently considering Mrs. Chikuku's case as a priority. Mrs. Chikuku will be notified of the outcome on her case in writing once a decision has been made.

IT (Disciplinary Procedures)

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many staff in his Department have *(a)* received official warnings and *(b)* faced disciplinary procedures following breaches of IT policy in each year since 1997. [205806]

Fiona Mactaggart: The figures, so far as information is available in the form requested, are as follows:

	1997		*1998*		*1999*		*2000*	
	(a)	*(b)*	*(a)*	*(b)*	*(a)*	*(b)*	*(a)*	*(b)*
HO	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	4	4
IND	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	2	1
FSS	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	5	5	1	1
UKPRS	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil
HMPS[1]	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

	2001		*2002*		*2003*		*2004*	
	(a)	*(b)*	*(a)*	*(b)*	*(a)*	*(b)*	*(a)*	*(b)*
HO	3	3	6	7	2	2	nil	nil
IND	7	4	74	57	20	10	26	8
FSS	2	2	5	5	1	1	23	23
UKPRS	nil	nil	nil	nil	4	15	nil	nil
HMPS[1]	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

[1] Figures for HMPS are not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Note:

(a) Staff receiving official warnings following breaches of IT policy.

(b) Staff facing disciplinary procedures following breaches of IT policy.

HO—non-Agency Home Office
IND—Immigration and Nationality Directorate
FSS—Forensic Science Service
UKPRS—United Kingdom Passport and Records Service
HMPS—Her Majesty's Prison Service

Jury Service

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which groups lost their exemption from jury service under the Criminal Justice Act 2003. [201829]

Paul Goggins: Schedule 1 to the Juries Act 1974 provided that various classes of person either must not or need not serve on a jury. Those who were "ineligible"—that is, not qualified to serve—included the judiciary, others (including prison officers) concerned with the administration of justice, the clergy and the mentally ill. Certain other groups of people were "excusable as of right"—that is, they had the right to refuse to do jury service if they so wished; these included persons aged between 65 and 69, members and peers of Parliament, the armed forces, members of the medical and similar professions, and people with religious objections.

Sir Robin Auld argued in his "Review of the Criminal Courts"

> "that these exemptions and excusals deprived juries of the experience and skills of a wide range of professional people"

and he recommended that the categories of ineligibility and excusal as of right set out in the Juries Act should be abolished, with the exception of those with mental disorders, who should continue to be ineligible for jury service. These changes were brought into effect on 5 April 2004 when section 321 of and Schedule 33 to the Criminal Justice Act 2003 were implemented.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what consultation took place with prison officer unions on proposals to allow prison officers to serve on juries. [201804]

Paul Goggins: A general consultation exercise on the recommendations of the "Review of the Criminal Courts", including those about jury service, took place in the Autumn of 2001 and the prison service unions had the opportunity to respond.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what protection he plans to provide to prison officers who serve in the same prison as a person convicted by a jury on which they served. [201805]

Paul Goggins: Prison officers who are summoned to carry out jury service at a court that normally sends convicted persons to the establishment where they work may ask to serve at a different court. Officers who nevertheless find that someone in whose case they have served on the jury is then sent to the prison where they work should raise the matter with management should any difficulties arise as a result.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to remove the right of prison officers to claim exemption from jury service. [201806]

Paul Goggins: Prison officers were formerly ineligible for jury service, but ceased to be so on 5 April 2004. It is open to them, as it is to anyone who feels they should not be expected to serve as a juror, to apply to the Jury Central Summoning Bureau, which administers a jury summoning service for the whole of England and Wales. They will need to show that they have good reason to defer their service or be excused from serving.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations his Department received from the Law Society on whether or not to exempt prison officers from jury service; and if he will publish them. [201807]

Paul Goggins: The Law Society was in favour of wider eligibility for jury service, but opposed making those who work in the criminal justice system eligible to serve, although the Society did not refer specifically to prison officers.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimates he has made of costs incurred by the Prison Service in loss of time when prison officers *(a)* serve on a jury and *(b)* attend jury selection. [201808]

Paul Goggins: No such estimates have been made.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of prison officers summoned to attend jury selection were rejected for jury service as a result of their occupation in the latest period for which figures are available. [201809]

Paul Goggins: This information is not recorded.

Knives

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent discussions he has had with *(a)* the police and *(b)* local authorities regarding people carrying knives. [201085]

Caroline Flint: Officials have had discussions with the police and trading standards officers as part of our review of action needed to tackle crime committed with knives.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what sentences are available to judges for under-age carrying of knives. [205561]

Paul Goggins: The offence of having an article with a blade or point in a public place without good reason or lawful authority carries a maximum penalty of two years imprisonment. Certain knives, such as flick-knives, are categorised as offensive weapons. Possession of an offensive weapon without lawful authority or reasonable excuse carries a maximum penalty of four years imprisonment.

18 to 20 year olds can receive a sentence of Detention in a Young Offenders Institution up to the maximum period of imprisonment available in the case of an over-21 year old. Offenders under 18 can receive a Detention and Training Order of up to 24 months for either of these offences.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what changes to sentencing provisions the Government plans in its proposals for the under-aged carrying of knives. [205562]

Caroline Flint: We are currently considering what more needs to be done to tackle knife-related crime. This includes reviewing the current legislation and penalties to deal with the carrying of knives and other offensive weapons.

Law of Murder

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has in the forthcoming review of the law of murder to implement the recommendations of the recent Law Commission Report to distinguish between sentencing for different types of murder. [201495]

Paul Goggins: Following the statement made by the then Home Secretary, my right hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield, Brightside (Mr. Blunkett), to the House on 28 October 2004, *Official Report*, column 1579, on the setting up of a review of murder, we are currently considering the full terms of reference for the review and will be announcing these in due course.

Life Sentences

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* men and *(b)* women are serving a life prison sentence in prisons in England and Wales. [206205]

Paul Goggins: On 31 October 2004, as recorded on the Prison Service central IT system, there were 5,520 males and 182 females serving life sentences in prison establishments in England and Wales.

Malwina Luczak

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department for what reasons the application of Dr. Malwina Luczak, Ref No. L1015769, for permanent leave to remain, which was received by the Data Processing Team NO DPT4 at Lunar House, Croydon, in September, was not processed until 14 October; which charged-leave team is handling this application; and when he expects the application to be determined. [203582]

Mr. Browne *[holding answer 9 December 2004]:* The application took eight working days to be forwarded to a case working team due to the influx of applications coming into the Immigration and Nationality Directorate at that time.

Dr. Luczak's application will now be decided by one of our European case working teams who will contact her if more information is required. They only deal with non-charged applications.

Miss Hajah Kamara

Sir Teddy Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department for what reasons Miss Hajah Kamara, reference K472827, has not had her passport returned; and for what reasons the Royal College of Nursing has not received a response to a complaint made to the Briefing and Complaints Section which was acknowledged on 7 October. [204991]

Mr. Browne *[holding answer 14 December 2004]:* Regrettably, a request to return Miss Kamara's passport was overlooked and the file placed in a queue awaiting decision. She was granted indefinite leave to remain on 13 December 2004 when her endorsed passport was returned.

I am sorry that no reply has been sent to the compliant from the Royal College of Nursing. Although the letter was acknowledged on 7 October, there is no record of it on the Briefing and Complaints Section database. A thorough search has been undertaken but regrettably the letter cannot be found.

Miss Mapolisa

Mr. Page: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when Miss Mapolisa will receive the necessary paperwork showing the changed conditions that will allow her to enter employment referred to in his Department's letter of the 29 October, reference M1093836. [204976]

Mr. Browne: The paperwork relating to this matter was sent to Miss Mapolisa on the 14 December 2004.

Mobile Phones

Judy Mallaber: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will encourage the mobile industry to protect children from undesirable content and unwanted contacts online by installing filtering and blocking technology as a default option. [199955]

Paul Goggins: We do encourage the mobile industry to do whatever it can to protect children from undesirable content and unwanted contact. The major providers have been very willing to work with us in this area, and are working toward implementation of the code of practice on new forms of content which they introduced earlier this year. Under this code operators will self-classify commercial content and will place all content deemed unsuitable for people under 18 behind access controls. Since internet content will not be self-classifiable in this way, they will offer customers the opportunity to apply a filter working to equivalent standards.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what guidance his Department issues to police forces on the enforcement of laws relating to driving while using a mobile phone. [205599]

Caroline Flint: The new, specific offence of using a hand-held phone while driving is intended to provide a simple, objective offence, the enforcement and prosecution of which does not depend on judgments of control or carelessness. The Association of Chief Police Officers have welcomed it as a straightforward method of dealing with this dangerous behaviour. The police will enforce the offence as operationally appropriate, and no specific guidance has been issued by the Government.

Mr. Letwin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he monitors the use by Government agencies of mobile phones to track the whereabouts of individuals. [205519]

Caroline Flint: Chapter II of Part I of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 provides a statutory framework for the lawful acquisition of communications data by specified relevant public authorities. Some, not all, of those authorities may acquire data about the location of a mobile phone when necessary and proportionate to achieve a legitimate aim. The exercise and performance of the powers under Chapter II of the 2000 Act is overseen by the Interception of Communications Commissioner (currently the right hon. Sir Swinton Thomas) not by the Secretary of State. The Commissioner is required by the Act to report annually to the Prime Minister about the carrying out of the Commissioner's functions. That report is laid before each House of Parliament.

Motoring Offences

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the number of uninsured drivers in each of the last 10 years, broken down by (i) gender and (ii) police authority region. [204721]

Caroline Flint: No estimates have been made centrally on the number of uninsured drivers.

Mr. Christopher Rodway

Mr. Lyons: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects the inquest into the death of Mr. Christopher Rodway to take place. [200890]

Paul Goggins: The timing of this inquest is a matter for the Wiltshire and Swindon coroner. I understand that no date has yet been fixed.

National Offender Management Service

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the National Offender Management Information Project will be the subject of a Gateway Review. [199999]

Paul Goggins: A Gateway 1 Review (business justification) was undertaken this autumn.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether a Gateway Zero Report was *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* completed at the launch of the National Offender Management Service in January. [200010]

Paul Goggins: The pre-Gateway Review was carried out over the summer. The "Gateway Review 0-Strategic Assessment" will commence on 17 January 2005.

Dr. Vis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment has been made of the implications of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 for the National Offender Management Service. [200468]

Paul Goggins: Procedures have been put in place to ensure that the National Offender Management Service is fully compliant with the Freedom of Information Act when it comes into full force on 1 January.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will place in the Library the responses to the consultation on the National Offender Management Service. [200930]

Paul Goggins: There have been two formal consultations about the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) since January 2004. The first followed the publication of "Reducing Crime—Changing Lives", the Government's response to Patrick Carter's review of Correctional Services; the second was in connection with the proposed organisational design of NOMS.

In accordance with the Cabinet Office Code of Practice on Consultation, a summary analysis and response has been prepared. It was announced to Parliament on Tuesday 26 October and is available in the Library of each House. It has also been made available to staff and key stakeholders through the prisons, probation and Home Office websites.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the duties of regional offender managers in the National Offender Management Service for each region in England and Wales. [201403]

Paul Goggins: The job specifications and selection criteria for the recently appointed Regional Offender Managers were contained in the information pack sent to prospective candidates. A copy of that information pack has been placed in the House of Commons Library.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Gateway Zero inquiry into the National Offender Management Service will be completed. [201438]

Paul Goggins: The Gateway Zero Review is scheduled to commence on 17 January 2005. It is expected that it will be completed within a week.

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the Probation Service Pay and Rewards Review and the Workload Measurement Tool will be implemented before the full introduction of the National Offender Management Service. [204962]

Paul Goggins: I remain committed to the early implementation of a negotiated, affordable, modernised pay and reward structure for the National Probation Service (NPS).

The workload measurement tool (WMT) is currently being piloted with the possibility of a third metropolitan area joining the pilot. Decisions about the implementation of the workload measurement tool across the NPS will not be taken without determining that the tool is "fit for purpose" in relation to the requirements of orders imposed under the Criminal Justice Act. The project will be the subject of a full financial appraisal and a detailed business case will need to be established. This current phase of work is scheduled for completion by April 2005.

The Probation Boards' Association and the NPS' trade unions are all represented on the WMT's Project Board and are aware of the time scales associated with the project.

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what local infrastructure will exist for the proposed public sector interventions arm of the reformed Probation Service in England and Wales under the National Offender Management Service proposals. [204971]

Paul Goggins: It has always been our intention to split Offender Management and Interventions within the National Offender Management Service. A final decision on the appropriate organisational structure for the public sector provision of interventions has not yet been made.

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his Department will be producing a business case which will explain how contestability will improve service delivery in relation to reducing offending and reducing the numbers in custody. [204973]

Paul Goggins: The detailed Business Case which is currently being developed will include a full explanation of all aspects of the contestability process.

Mrs. Helen Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether sentencing practice will be changed prior to the implementation of the National Offender Management Service. [205315]

Paul Goggins: Sentencing practice will change through the work of the Sentencing Guidelines Council and the implementation of the Criminal Justice Act 2003. The Council is responsible for producing comprehensive guidelines for all courts, which will provide clarity and consistency in sentencing. The Council was established in March 2004 and its first priority was to produce guidelines on the provisions in the Criminal Justice Act 2003. These were published on 16 December.

Advisory Board on Naturalisation and Integration

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the *(a)* names and *(b)* occupations of the members of the Advisory Board on Nationalisation and Integration; and what the remit is of the Advisory Board on Naturalisation and Integration. [204470]

Mr. Browne: The Advisory Board on Naturalisation and Integration (ABNI) is an advisory non-departmental public body. Its terms of reference are:

> To advise on the implementation and processes of initial and final assessment of understanding of language and of civic structures as required by the Nationality Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.
>
> To advise on ways in which language and citizenship education resources and support services both in the public and in the voluntary might be developed and better co-ordinated.
>
> To advise on future development of the programme of studies and suggest changes in light of feedback from early participants.
>
> To publish an annual report on the administration of the learning and teaching processes involved in naturalisation, on the integration of immigrants, and on immigration law and procedures and educational regulations that directly affect assessment for naturalisation.

Members of the ABNI

Member	*Occupation*
Professor Sir Bernard Crick, Chair	Emeritus Professor of Politics, Birkbeck College, University of London
Ms. Mary Coussey, Vice-Chair	Independent Race Monitor to the Immigration Service and Equality and Diversity consultant
Ms. Celine Castelino,	Head of ESOL Development at the Basic Skills Agency
Mrs. Mary Curnock Cook	Director of Qualifications and Skills, at the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA)
Ms. Sally Daghlian	Chief Executive of the Scottish Refugee Council: Trustee of the British Refugee Council
Sir Robert Dowling	Head teacher of an inner city comprehensive school
Ms. Samina Khan	County Community Education Officer(Essential Skills, Cardiff
Mrs. Janet Luff	Curriculum Manager for ESOL at Liverpool Community College
Ms. Adeeba Malik	Deputy Chief Executive of QED(UK
Professor Elizabeth Meehan	Professor of Politics and Jean Monnet Professor at Queens' University Belfast, and Director of the Institute of Governance, Public Policy and Social Research
Dr. Robert David Muir	Independent consultant, specialising in diversity training
Sir Gulam Noon	Chairman of the Noon Group, The Noon Foundation, and Noon Products Ltd. Managing Director of Bombay Halwa Ltd.
Mr. Ashok Ohri	Self-employed consultant and trainer in the field of community development. Co-director of Organisation and Social Development Consultants Ltd.
Ms. Maeve Sherlock	Chief Executive of the Refugee Council.
Mrs. Jean Wilson	On secondment to the Scottish Qualifications Authority as ESOL Development Officer. Co-chair of the National Association for Teaching English and Community Languages to Adults (NATECLA).
Mr. Patrick Wintour	Director of the Employability Forum: Member of the National Refugee Integration Forum.
Ms. Annette Zera	Freelance facilitator and trainer in organisational development. Previously, Principal of Tower Hamlets College.

New Prisons

Mrs. Cheryl Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether private sector companies will be invited to bid for the new prison establishment in Elmet constituency. [204661]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 13 December 2004]*: Although site searches have been conducted, no decisions have yet been made about the locations at which sites for new prisons may be purchased.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 7 December 204, *Official Report*, column 410W, on new prisons, on what date the meeting with the hon. Member for Elmet (Colin Burgon) was first suggested; and whether the meeting was initiated by the Minister. [204662]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 13 December 2004]*: The hon. Member for Elmet (Colin Burgon) requested a meeting with me on Friday 12 November. We met on Thursday 18 November.

Northern Ireland (Immigration Procedures)

Mr. Walter: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment his Department has made of the effect on immigration to Northern Ireland of different admission criteria used by immigration officers in the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom. [204868]

Mr. Browne *[holding answer 16 December 2004]*: Immigration policy in relation to Ireland is a matter for the Irish Government. However, there is ongoing close co-operation between the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom to ensure that foreign nationals cannot abuse the immigration controls of either country. This close co-operation has included a recent detailed assessment of foreign nationals travelling between the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland through Northern Ireland. The results of this assessment are currently being evaluated.

Oakington Reception Centre

Ms Abbott: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what measures are being taken to ensure that adequate access to education is being provided to children detained at Oakington Reception Centre. [206243]

Mr. Browne: Education facilities are provided for children between the ages of five and 17 years within the Family Unit. Classes take place every weekday between 09:00 and 15:30 hours and continue throughout school holidays, apart from bank holidays.

Qualified teachers provide a range of activities meeting the core requirements of the National Curriculum, including English, mathematics, IT skills and physical education.

Oasys IT System

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the original costings were for connecting the Prison Service and the Probation Services' Oasys IT systems; and whether they have been revised. [200003]

Paul Goggins: The initial IT development estimates were £2.9 million for the Prison Service and £2.4 million for the Probation Service. The latest forecast of outturn for IT development is £3.5 million for the Prison Service and £2.7 million for the Probation Service.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the Oasys system will apply to those sentenced to less than 12 months imprisonment. [200004]

Paul Goggins: Oasys assessments for those sentenced to less than 12 months imprisonment, are only a mandatory requirement for young adult offenders, aged 18 to 20. However, some adult short-term prisoners will have had an initial Oasys prepared by the National Probation Service as part of a pre-sentence report, and this will be available to the Prison Service. This policy will be reviewed as we prepare for the introduction of Custody Plus.

Some prisons currently provide custody plans or "prisoner passports", which focus on resettlement issues, for adults serving short sentences. This is good practice although not mandatory.

Offender Behaviour Programmes

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the offender behaviour programmes available at each prison establishment. [201053]

Paul Goggins: The accredited offending behaviour and drug treatment programmes delivered by each establishment are shown in the following tables but may be subject to change.

Offending behaviour programmes by establishment

Establishment	*ETS*	*CSB*	*CALM*	*CSCP*	*DV*	*SOTP*
Acklington	Yes	—	—	—	Yes	Yes
Albany	Yes	Yes	—	—	—	Yes
Altcourse *(p)*	[1]—	—	—	—	—	—
Ashfield *(p)*	—	—	—	—	—	—
Ashwell	Yes	—	—	—	—	—
Askham Grange	—	—	—	—	—	—
Aylesbury	Yes	—	Yes	—	—	Yes
Bedford	—	—	—	—	—	—
Belmarsh	—	—	—	—	—	—
Birmingham	—	—	—	—	—	—
Blakenhurst	Yes	—	—	—	—	[1]—
Blantyre House	—	—	—	—	—	—
Blundeston	Yes	—	Yes	—	—	—
Brinsford	Yes	—	—	—	—	—
Bristol	Yes	—	Yes	—	—	—
Brixton	[1]—	—	—	—	—	—
Brockhill	—	—	—	—	—	—
Buckley Hall	Yes	—	—	—	—	Yes
Bullingdon	Yes	—	—	—	—	—
Bullwood Hall	Yes	—	—	—	—	—
Camp Hill	Yes	—	Yes	—	—	—
Canterbury	[1]—	—	—	—	—	—
Cardiff	Yes	—	Yes	—	—	—
Castington	Yes	—	—	—	—	—
Channings Wood	Yes	—	—	Yes	—	Yes
Chelmsford	Yes	—	—	—	—	—
Coldingley	[1]—	—	—	—	—	—
Cookham Wood	[1]—	—	—	—	—	—
Dartmoor	Yes	—	Yes	—	—	—
Deerbolt	Yes	—	—	—	—	—
Doncaster *(p)*	[1]—	—	—	—	—	—
Dorchester	[1]—	—	—	—	—	—
Dovegate *(p)*	Yes	—	—	—	—	[1]—
Dover	—	—	—	—	—	—
Downview	Yes	—	—	—	—	—
Drake Hall	Yes	Yes	—	—	—	—
Durham	—	—	—	—	—	—
Eastwood Park	[1]—	—	—	—	—	—

Offending behaviour programmes by establishment

Establishment	*ETS*	*CSB*	*CALM*	*CSCP*	*DV*	*SOTP*
Edmonds Hill	[1]—	—	—	—	—	—
Elmley	Yes	—	—	—	—	Yes
Erlestoke	Yes	—	—	—	Yes	—
Everthorpe	Yes	—	—	—	—	—
Exeter	Yes	—	—	—	—	—
Featherstone	Yes	—	Yes	—	—	—
Feltham	Yes	—	—	—	—	—
Ford	[1]—	—	—	—	—	—
Forest Bank *(p)*	[1]—	—	—	—	—	—
Foston Hall	Yes	—	—	—	—	—
Frankland	Yes	—	—	—	—	Yes
Full Sutton	Yes	—	—	—	—	Yes
Garth	Yes	—	Yes	—	—	—
Gartree	Yes	—	Yes	Yes	Yes	—
Glen Parva	Yes	—	—	—	—	—
Gloucester	—	—	—	—	—	—
Grendon/Spring Hill	—	—	—	—	—	—
Guys Marsh	Yes	—	[1]—	—	—	—
Haslar	—	—	—	—	—	—
Haverigg Camp	—	—	—	—	—	—
Hewell Grange	—	—	—	—	—	—
High Down	[1]—	—	[1]—	—	—	—
Highpoint (adult male)	Yes	Yes	[1]—	—	—	—
Hindley	Yes	—	[1]—	—	—	—
Hollesley Bay	—	—	—	—	—	—
Holloway	—	—	—	—	—	—
Holme House	Yes	—	—	—	—	—
Hull	Yes	—	—	—	—	Yes
Huntercombe	—	—	—	—	—	—
Kingston	—	—	Yes	Yes	—	—
Kirkham	—	—	—	—	—	—
Kirklevington	—	—	—	—	—	—
Lancaster Castle	—	—	—	—	—	—
Lancaster Farms	Yes	—	—	—	—	—
Latchmere House	—	—	—	—	—	—
Leeds	—	—	—	—	—	—
Leicester	[1]—	—	—	—	—	—
Lewes	[1]—	—	—	—	—	—
Leyhill	Yes	Yes	—	—	—	Yes
Lincoln	[1]—	—	—	—	—	—
Lindholme	Yes	—	—	—	—	—
Littlehey	Yes	—	—	—	—	Yes
Liverpool	Yes	—	—	—	—	—
Long Lartin	Yes	—	Yes	Yes	—	—
Low Newton	Yes	—	—	—	—	—
Lowdham Grange *(p)*	Yes	—	—	—	—	—
Maidstone	Yes	—	—	—	—	Yes
Manchester	Yes	—	—	—	Yes	Yes
Moorland	Yes	—	Yes	—	—	—
Morton Hall	—	—	—	—	—	—
New Hall	Yes	—	—	—	—	—
North Sea Camp	—	—	—	—	—	—
Northallerton	—	—	—	—	—	—
Norwich	Yes	Yes	—	—	—	—
Nottingham	[1]—	—	—	—	—	—
Onley	Yes	—	—	—	—	—
Parc *(p)*	Yes	—	—	—	—	Yes
Parkhurst	Yes	—	Yes	Yes	—	—
Pentonville	Yes	—	Yes	—	—	—
Portland	Yes	—	—	—	—	—
Preston	Yes	—	—	—	—	—
Ranby	Yes	—	Yes	—	—	—
Reading	Yes	—	—	—	—	—
Risley	Yes	—	Yes	—	—	Yes
Rochester	[1]—	—	—	—	—	—
Rye hill *(p)*	Yes	—	—	—	—	Yes
Send	Yes	—	—	—	—	—
Shepton Mallet	Yes	—	—	—	—	Yes
Shrewsbury	—	—	—	—	—	—
Stafford	Yes	—	—	—	—	Yes
Standford Hill	[1]—	—	—	—	—	—
Stocken	Yes	—	Yes	—	—	—
Stoke Heath	Yes	—	—	—	—	—

Offending behaviour programmes by establishment

Establishment	*ETS*	*CSB*	*CALM*	*CSCP*	*DV*	*SOTP*
Styal	Yes	—	—	—	—	—
Sudbury	[1]—	[1]—	—	—	—	—
Swaleside	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	—	—
Swansea	Yes	—	—	—	—	—
Swinfen Hall	Yes	—	Yes	—	—	Yes
The Mount	Yes	—	Yes	—	—	—
The Verne	Yes	—	—	—	—	—
The Wolds *(p)*	Yes	Yes	Yes	—	—	—
Thorn Cross	Yes	—	—	—	—	—
Usk/Prescoed	Yes	Yes	—	—	—	Yes
Wakefield	Yes	—	—	—	—	Yes
Wandsworth	Yes	—	—	—	—	Yes
Warren Hill	—	—	—	—	—	—
Wayland	Yes	—	—	—	—	Yes
Wealstun	Yes	—	—	—	—	—
Weare	—	—	—	—	—	—
Wellingborough	Yes	Yes	—	—	—	—
Werrington	—	—	—	—	—	—
Wetherby	—	—	—	—	—	—
Whatton	Yes	—	—	—	—	Yes
Whitemoor	Yes	—	Yes	—	—	—
Winchester	Yes	—	[1]—	—	—	—
Woodhill	Yes	—	—	—	—	[1]—
Wormwood Scrubs	Yes	—	—	—	—	[1]—
Wymott	Yes	Yes	—	—	—	Yes

Yes = Establishments which are currently delivering and will deliver 2005–06.

[1] Establishments which were delivering in 2003–04 and will cease to deliver during 2004–05.

ETS—Enhanced Thinking Skills
CSB—Cognitive Skills Booster
CALM—Controlling Anger and Learning to Manage it
CSCP—Cognitive Self-Change Programme
DV—Domestic Violence (aka Healthy Relationships)
SOTP—Sex Offender Treatment Programmes

Drug programmes

Establishment	*New programmes funded by NDPDU*	*Existing PASRO/SDP*	*Other exiting programmes*
Acklington	—	—	AOD
Altcourse	SDP	—	STOP
Ashfield (J)	—	—	Validated
Ashwell	—	PASRO	—
Aylesbury (Yes)	—	—	RAPT
Bedford	—	SDP	—
Birmingham	SDP	—	—[1]
Blakenhurst	—	SDP	—
Blundeston	PASRO	—	—[1]
Bristol	—	—	Validated
Brixton	—	PASRO	—
Brixton	—	SDP	—
Bullingdon	SDP	—	Ley
Bullwood Hall (F)	—	—	AOD
Camp Hill	PASRO	—	—
Canterbury	PASRO	—	—
Cardiff	—	PASRO	—
Castington (Yes)	SDP	—	—
Channings Wood	—	—	TC
Chelmsford	—	PASRO	—
Coldingley	—	—	RAPT
Cookham Wood (F)	PASRO	—	—
Dartmoor	—	PASRO	—
Deerbolt (Yes)	PASRO	—	—[1]
Doncaster	SDP	—	—
Dorchester	SDP	—	—
Downview(F)	PASRO	—	—
Drake Hall (F)	—	—	Validated
Durham	PASRO	—	—
Edmund Hill	PASRO	—	—[1]
Elmley	—	PASRO	—
Erlestoke	—	—	12 Step P/S
Everthorpe	PASRO	—	12 Step Rapt
Exeter	—	SDP	—

Drug programmes

Establishment	*New programmes funded by NDPDU*	*Existing PASRO/SDP*	*Other exiting programmes*
F Bank	SDP	—	—
Featherstone	PASRO	—	—
Ford	SDP	—	—
Frankland	—	—	FOCUS
Full Sutton	—	—	FOCUS
Garth	—	—	TC
Gartree	—	—	STOP
Glen Parva (Yes)	—	PASRO	—
Glen Parva (Yes)	—	SDP	—
Gloucester	—	—	Validated
Guys Marsh (Yes)	—	PASRO	—
Haverigg	—	PASRO	—
High Point	—	—	AOD
Highdown	PASRO	—	—
Hindley (Yes)	—	PASRO	—
Hollesley Bay	SDP	—	—
Holloway(F)	SDP	—	—
Holme House	SDP	—	TC
Hull	SDP	—	—
Kingston	PASRO	—	—
Kirkham	PASRO	—	—
Lancaster Castle	—	PASRO	12 Step P/S
Lancaster Farms (Yes)	SDP	—	—
Leeds	—	PASRO	—
Leicester	SDP	—	—
Lewes	PASRO	—	—
Leyhill	—	—	Validated
Lincoln	PASRO	—	—
Lindholme	—	PASRO	—
Littlehey	—	—	12 Step Rapt
Liverpool	—	PASRO	—
Long Lartin	—	—	FOCUS
Low Newton (F)	—	PASRO	—
Lowdon Grange	—	—	AOD
Maidstone	—	PASRO	—
Manchester	SDP	—	—
Moorland	—	PASRO	—
North Sea Camp	SDP	—	—
New Hall	—	SDP	—
Northallerton (Yes)	SDP	—	—
Norwich	—	—	12 Step Rapt
Nottingham	—	SDP	Validated
Onley (Yes)	PASRO	—	—
Pare	—	PASRO	—
Parkhurst	PASRO	—	—
Pentonville	SDP	—	—
Pentonville	PASRO	—	—
Portland	PASRO	—	—
Preston	SDP	—	—
Ranby	PASRO	—	—
Reading (Yes)	—	—	Validated
Risley	—	PASRO	—
Rochester (Yes)	—	PASRO	—
Send (F)	—	—	RAPT
Stafford	—	PASRO	—
Stocken	—	—	STOP
Stoke Heath (Yes)	SDP	—	—
Styal (F)	SDP	—	—
Swaleside	—	—	RAPT
Swansea	SDP	—	12 Step P/S
Swinfen Hall (Yes)	—	PASRO	—
T/Cross	SDP	—	—
The Mount	—	—	12 Step Rapt
The Verne	—	—	12 Step P/S
Wakefield	—	—	FOCUS
Wandsworth	—	—	12 Step Rapt
Warren Hill (J)	—	—	Validated
Wayland	—	PASRO	—
Wealston	PASRO	—	—
Weare	SDP	—	—
Wellingborough	PASRO	—	—
Whitemoor	—	—	FOCUS
Winchester	PASRO	—	—

Drug programmes

Establishment	*New programmes funded by NDPDU*	*Existing PASRO/SDP*	*Other exiting programmes*
Winchester	SDP	—	—
Woodhill	SDP	—	—
Wormwood Scrubbs	—	SDP	AOD
Wymott	—	—	TC

[1] AOD or validated converting to PASRO/SDP by 31 March 2005.
Validated—Programmes agreed locally but are not accredited
AOD—Action on Drugs
PASRO—Prison—Addressing Substance Related Offending
FOCUS—A high intensity cognitive behavioural programme
RAPT—Rehabilitation of Addicted Prisoners Trust
TC—Therapeutic Community
SDP—Short Duration Programme
STOP—Substance Treatment and Offending Programme
NDPDU—National Drug Programme Delivery Unit

Offenders (Reports)

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many reports his Department has commissioned regarding *(a)* sentencing and *(b)* the management of offenders since 1997; on what dates these reports were commissioned; who carried out the reviews; at what cost; and when his Department received each report. [199525]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 29 November 2004]:* Since 1997, the Home Office has commissioned two major reports on sentencing and the management of offenders. The first of these was the Halliday Report ("Making Punishments Work"), which was launched in May 2000 and reported in July 2001. The author was John Halliday. The total cost of the report was £56,301.

The second was the Carter Report ("Managing Offenders, Reducing Crime") commissioned by the PM, Treasury and Home Secretary on 17 March 2003. The author was Patrick Carter (now Lord Carter of Coles). The report was received on 11 December 2003 and published on 6 January 2004. The cost of Patrick Carter's review was met by the three commissioning Departments. The Home Office contributed staff resources via seconded staff, and contributed £55,997 to the costs of expenses, research support and publication. The total cost of the Carter report is not readily available.

In addition to these two major projects, the Home Office has either commissioned or published an estimated 143 projects relating to more specific issues within the area of sentencing or offender management since 1997. These mostly comprise one-off research projects, and exclude the Home Office's series of statistical publications in those areas. Some of these projects have already been completed and published, others are still in progress. These projects have been carried out by a variety of external research teams (usually from universities or commercial research organisations) and in some cases by research development and statistics staff. It would be disproportionately costly to provide information on their total costs or the dates on which they reported.

Office of Government Commerce

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what guidance his Department has received from the Office of Government Commerce on the timing of Gateway Zero consultations in respect of projects and programme development. [201439]

Paul Goggins: The Office of Government Commerce was fully consulted and the time scale of Gateway Zero Review was agreed with them.

Operation Blunt

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what powers have been used to *(a)* X-ray and *(b)* stop and search individuals suspected of carrying knives at Hammersmith bus station as part of "Operation Blunt"; and how many individuals have been arrested for knife crimes as a result. [206615]

Caroline Flint: The Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police informs me that a metal detecting scanner was used at Hammersmith bus station as part of "Operation Blunt". Individuals were only searched if the officer had grounds to do so under Section 1 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984. Three individuals were arrested as a result of the operation for offences connected to the possession of knives.

Operation Safeguard

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police forces are on standby for Operation Safeguard. [201036]

Paul Goggins: There are no plans to activate Operation Safeguard. No police forces have been placed on standby for the routine use of police cells.

Overseas Bribery

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many meetings representatives of the law enforcement agencies have had with representatives from the Confederation of British Industry and other industry groups to discuss enforcement of overseas bribery offences in the last year; and on what dates. [201629]

Paul Goggins: Law enforcement authorities operate independently of Government and we do not have this information.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many meetings officials from his Department have had since October 2003 with the

Confederation of British Industry at which legislation on overseas bribery was discussed; and on what dates. [201647]

Paul Goggins: One, on 27 October 2004.

Passports

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people born in the UK to a British father and a foreign mother applied for a British passport *(a)* in the last year and *(b)* in the last three years; how many were successful in each case; and if he will make a statement. [200481]

Mr. Browne: British passports are issued to British nationals as defined under the appropriate legislation. Between 2003–04 the UKPS issued 5,910,154 passports, and between 2001–04 they issued 17,0123,386 passports. It is not possible to determine how many of these passports were issued to a person born in the UK to a British father and a foreign mother.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people he estimates will *(a)* purchase a passport for the first time and *(b)* renew their passport in each of the next 10 years. [202993]

Mr. Browne: The table outlines the UK Passport Service's 10-year forecast of demand for adult and child new passports and adult and child passport renewals.

Calendar year	*Adult and child new passport applications*	*Adult and child passport renewals*
2005	1,601,253	4,632,712
2006	1,435,991	5,085,452
2007	1,289,394	4,742,759
2008	1,223,098	4,643,376
2009	1,158,301	4,270,855
2010	1,130,871	4,484,287
2011	1,132,834	4,731,112
2012	1,135,252	4,577,353
2013	1,137,604	4,641,283
2014	1,139,592	5,049,706

These figures do not include applications for replacement lost or stolen passports or amendments to existing passports.

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the current EU proposal to mandate biometric passports for its citizens is in an area the UK has opted out of as part of its opt out from the Schengen Acquis; and whether the UK will be required by the EU to introduce biometric passports under current proposals. [203708]

Mr. Browne *[holding answer 9 December 2004]*: The recitals to this draft Regulation confirm that the UK is not bound by it. We are, therefore, not required by the EU to introduce biometric passports. We do, however, have plans to introduce a biometric passport independent of this Regulation.

Police Injuries

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police officers have been victims of *(a)* fatal injuries, *(b)* serious injuries and *(c)* slight injuries resulting from (i) gun crime and (ii) knife crime in each year since 1997. [205357]

Caroline Flint: The available information relates to the number of police officers injured by a firearm while on duty and is given in the table. With regard to knife crime, information is only available for police officers who suffer fatal injuries where the apparent method of killing was a sharp instrument. Two police officers have suffered a fatal injury in these circumstances during the period requested, one in 1997–98 and one in 2002–03.

Crimes recorded by the police in which a police officer on duty was injured by a firearm—1997–98 to 2002–03

Period	*Total*	*Fatal injury*	*Serious injury*[1]	*Slight injury*
1997–98	6	—	3	3
1998–99	11	—	—	11
1999–2000	10	—	—	10
2000–01	7	—	5	2
2001–02	10	—	—	10
2002–03	12	—	1	11

[1] A serious injury is one which necessitated detention in hospital or involved fractures, concussion, severe general shock, penetration by a bullet or multiple shot wounds

Drink Driving

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people were stopped and tested for drink driving in each of the last five years *(a)* in Lancashire, *(b)* in each police authority area and *(c)* in total. [201124]

Caroline Flint: The information requested is given in the table.

Number of screening breath tests by police force area, 1998–2002[1]
England and Wales

Police force area	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*
Avon and Somerset	19,700	19,200	15,800	15,400	15,100
Bedfordshire	5,300	2,900	3,300	4,200	6,200
Cambridgeshire	17,800	13,600	12,800	12,700	13,000
Cheshire	23,300	20,500	15,800	13,600	12,200
Cleveland	34,200	28,600	18,800	14,100	11,000
Cumbria	9,400	7,100	6,100	5,100	4,700
Derbyshire	35,700	49,200	52,000	42,100	37,900
Devon and Cornwall	15,700	14,700	13,000	13,500	12,600
Dorset	10,100	9,200	12,300	10,400	10,400
Durham	7,400	12,700	15,300	16,300	9,500
Essex	28,400	24,100	27,200	18,900	16,100

Number of screening breath tests by police force area, 1998–2002[1]
England and Wales

Police force area	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*
Gloucestershire	9,300	8,300	8,200	9,600	9,300
Greater Manchester	31,200	21,500	27,300	23,900	23,200
Hampshire	27,300	31,600	35,200	35,200	35,200
Hertfordshire	8,100	7,000	6,000	5,500	4,300
Humberside	8,300	8,100	9,400	7,500	8,700
Kent	27,500	32,700	32,200	32,200	34,200
Lancashire	20,300	19,100	15,500	10,000	10,600
Leicestershire	20,200	21,100	18,600	14,900	14,500
Lincolnshire	25,900	21,000	12,100	13,600	9,000
London, City of	3,300	1,700	1,100	1,100	1,400
Merseyside	18,700	18,600	12,800	7,200	7,000
Metropolitan Police	111,400	99,800	93,800	65,100	57,200
Norfolk	12,400	11,600	9,100	9,100	5,300
Northamptonshire	4,700	5,300	5,800	4,500	3,300
Northumbria	12,200	12,500	12,700	12,400	11,800
North Yorkshire	9,900	8,100	6,700	7,400	7,300
Nottinghamshire	8,900	8,400	8,400	7,700	5,800
South Yorkshire	12,600	16,100	19,200	18,000	14,400
Staffordshire	15,400	10,100	7,700	4,700	5,300
Suffolk	15,600	15,100	9,200	8,600	8,900
Surrey	11,400	11,700	12,400	13,300	7,500
Sussex	17,400	17,900	20,800	21,800	17,300
Thames Valley	34,200	30,300	30,800	26,200	25,300
Warwickshire	8,700	8,600	7,100	5,800	5,100
West Mercia	19,100	12,300	8,900	9,100	8,200
West Midlands	24,100	21,300	16,200	12,200	10,500
West Yorkshire	22,900	18,800	18,300	17,200	16,700
Wiltshire	7,100	6,800	6,500	5,900	5,900
Dyfed-Powys	9,200	9,900	7,400	7,000	7,300
Gwent	11,200	10,600	10,100	6,400	3,800
North Wales	15,200	15,900	15,000	15,100	19,600
South Wales	24,900	20,700	17,800	19,300	17,500
Total	815,500	764,500	714,800	623,900	570,200

[1] Figures for 2003 will be available in the spring 2005

Prison (Visiting Times)

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps are being taken to ensure that prison visiting times are available outside school hours. [206288]

Paul Goggins: Prison visiting times are determined by individual governors, taking account of operational matters, resources and demand. In line with core Prison Service policy to assist and encourage contact between prisoners and their families, all establishments have a mandatory duty to make available regular weekend visits to prisoners. Some establishments are also able to hold evening visits and an increasing number now provide extended children's visits and family days.

Prison Service

Mr. Gerrard: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he expects the Prison Service to meet its racial employment targets for the current year. [201621]

Paul Goggins: The Home Office race employment target for the Prison Service is to achieve 6 per cent. Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) staff representation by April 2005, although current predictions indicate it is unlikely to meet that target. BME staff representation is currently 5.51 per cent.

The Prison Service has taken a number of steps to increase the profile of the Service among BME communities. An outreach support team based in Prison Service Headquarters provides guidance and advice to local recruiters and has put in place a series of supporting tools, including:

An outreach toolkit website launched at the end of October 2004;

An outreach support network—represented by a central co-ordinator in each area;

REACH OUT—a recruitment outreach newsletter; and

An annual outreach conference—the next is planned to take place in March 2005.

Through these measures, recruiters are encouraged to develop an outreach strategy that includes representation at community, religious and cultural, and lifestyle events as well as attendance at recruitment and career fares.

Over the last two months the Prison Service has run a national awareness advertising campaign targeting under-represented groups. The campaign is aimed at raising awareness of the diverse range of career opportunities available within the service. While it is too early to evaluate the effectiveness of the initiative, there has been a significant increase in interest in the Prison Service website (over 120 per cent.). The Prison Service has made it clear to the advertising agencies it uses, that they must consider advertising strategies that attract applications from under-represented groups.

Prisoners

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* unconvicted and *(b)* convicted unsentenced prisoners are held in prisons in England and Wales, broken down by sex. [203381]

Paul Goggins: The information requested, as recorded on the Prison Service central IT system on 31 October 2004, is provided in the table.

Remand population in prison establishments, by custody type and sex England and Wales, 31 October 2004

	Males	*Females*
Untried	7,098	503
Convicted Unsentenced	4,297	331

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many hours per week on average remand prisoners spent out of cell in each local prison in England and Wales in 2003. [203382]

Paul Goggins: The Prison Service does not collect specific details of the number of hours that remand prisoners spend out of cell. Details of time out of cell for all prisoners and each establishment average are collected but these do not allow the specific identification of the position for remand prisoners.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average population of prisoners on remand was in England and Wales in 2003. [203383]

Paul Goggins: The average remand population in prison establishments in England and Wales in 2003, as recorded on the Prison Service central IT system, was 12,923.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* male and *(b)* female remand prisoners were subsequently (i) acquitted and (ii) sentenced to a non-custodial penalty in the last 12 months for which figures are available. [203384]

Paul Goggins: The following table gives the estimated numbers of male and female defendants remanded in custody by final outcome at the magistrates' courts and the Crown court in 2003.

Final court outcome for persons remanded in custody at some stage in magistrates' courts and Crown court[1] 2003

Thousand (of persons)

Final outcome	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*
Acquitted or not proceeded with etc.	20	2	22
Convicted:			
Discharge	3	1	3
Fine	4	0	4
Community sentence[2]	14	2	16
Fully suspended sentence	0	0	0
Immediate custody[3]	44	4	48
Total number sentenced[4]	71	8	79

[1] Remand status shown is that given by the court passing sentence. Includes those remanded for part of the time in custody and part on bail.

[2] Community rehabilitation orders, supervision orders, community punishment orders, attendance centre orders, community punishment and rehabilitation orders, curfew orders, reparation orders action plan orders and drug treatment and testing orders.

[3] Includes detention in a young offender institution, detention and training orders and unsuspended imprisonment.

[4] Includes offences otherwise dealt with.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners have been on remand awaiting trial for over *(a)* six months, *(b)* 12 months, *(c)* 18 months and *(d)* over two years; and if he will make a statement. [203385]

Paul Goggins: The available information is not sufficiently reliable to break down into the level of detail required.

We estimate that, on 30 June 2003, around 500 prisoners had been on untried remand for more than six months up to and including 12 months. We further estimate that, on the same date, around 100 prisoners had been on untried remand for more than 12 months. These figures include any intervening time spent outside of prison establishments.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners convicted of sex offences have escaped from open prisons in the last three years; and if he will make a statement. [203532]

Paul Goggins: Prisoners are considered to abscond, rather than to escape, from open prisons. The information sought is set out in the following table. This shows the number of prisoners who have absconded from open prisons or failed to return from a period of temporary release from an open prison in the years from 2002 to 2004 and who were serving sentences for sex offences at the time. Prescoed began taking sex offenders this year. All 10 of these prisoners were recaptured and none were still at large on 7 December 2004.

Prison	*2002*	*2003*	*2004 (to 7 December)*
Leyhill	3	2	1
North Sea Camp	2	0	1
Prescoed	—	—	1

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the prisoners that have absconded from prison over the past five years and failed to be recaptured; for which crimes each was convicted; and what sentence each was serving. [199975]

Paul Goggins: Once a prisoner is unlawfully at large the matter passes into the hands of the police. The information requested in respect of prisoners who have absconded over the past five years and are still unlawfully at large is available only at disproportionate cost.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people who had completed their sentence were being held in a prison establishment on 14 December, broken down by *(a)* prison, *(b)* nationality and *(c)* ethnicity. [205629]

Mr. Browne *[holding answer 20 December 2004]*: Information on the number of people who were detained in prison establishments solely under Immigration Act powers after a completion of a criminal sentence is not available.

Work is ongoing to improve the quality of data held on those people detained under Immigration Act powers in Prison Service establishments.

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of the *(a)* female and *(b)* male prison population were serving prison sentences for their first criminal offence in each year since 1997. [206277]

Paul Goggins: The requested information has been published in table 8.7 of the Home Office Statistical Bulletin "Offender Management Caseload Statistics". A copy of this publication can be found in the House of Commons Library.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the pay rates for *(a)* work and *(b)* education are in each prison in England and Wales. [201391]

Paul Goggins: It is Prison Service policy that all prisoners who are employed in purposeful activity such as work, induction, education, training and offending behaviour programmes, must be paid. The minimum rate of pay for all these activities is set nationally and is currently £4.00 a week.

Each prison is able to set their own pay rates over and above the national minimum. Rates of pay will therefore vary between prisons and between activities within a prison, as Governors use this discretion to pay rates that reflect local conditions. The Prison Service does not keep national statistics on rates of local pay and so we are unable to provide the information requested.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what proportion of prisoners who were given detoxification in the last 12 months for which figures are available entered one of the Prison Service's drug rehabilitation programmes; [201384]

(2) what proportion of prisoners who entered a drug rehabilitation programme in the last 12 months for which figures are available went on to complete those programmes; and what proportion failed to complete such programmes. [201385]

Paul Goggins: In 2003–04, 57,891 prisoners received clinical interventions (detoxification or maintenance prescribing) and 4,703 entered an intensive drug rehabilitation programme, of whom 2,287 (48 per cent.) failed to complete a programme. The great majority of those who attend a programme will have received a clinical intervention on first arrival in prison custody.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what factors have been identified as accounting for the increase of self harming incidents in prisons between 1999 and 2003; and if he will make a statement. [201028]

Paul Goggins: In December 2002 new procedures for reporting self-injury were introduced in prisons in England and Wales. The evidence suggests that much of the increase in reported self-harm in 2003 may result from this change rather than an actual increase in incidence of self-harm.

The prison population includes a large number of prisoners with a combination of psychiatric disorders, alcohol and drug dependency, family background and relationship problems, histories of self-harm and previous abuse, all of which raise their risk of suicide and self-harm.

A number of interventions have been introduced to support prisoners who self-harm. These include counselling, support groups, and specialised psychological interventions. A network has been established to develop this work, to facilitate evaluation and share good practice. Guidance to staff on managing people who self-harm has also been circulated to establishments.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many life sentence prisoners have been released on parole during each of the last 48 months. [201034]

Paul Goggins: The requested information is shown in the table. Information for the period November 2000 to March 2001 relates to first time releases only. Subsequent data includes cases where the prisoners have been re-released following the earlier revocation of their life licence.

Releases on life licence November 2000-October 2004

Month	*Year*	*Number of releases*
November	2000	6
December	2000	4
January	2001	16
February	2001	14
March	2001	13
April	2001	25
May	2001	12
June	2001	14
July	2001	11
August	2001	17
September	2001	9
October	2001	18
November	2001	15
December	2001	10
January	2002	10
February	2002	13
March	2002	10
April	2002	12
May	2002	17
June	2002	12
July	2002	22
August	2002	26
September	2002	14
October	2002	26
November	2002	14
December	2002	18
January	2003	18
February	2003	28
March	2003	29
April	2003	18

Releases on life licence November 2000-October 2004

Month	*Year*	*Number of releases*
May	2003	30
June	2003	22
July	2003	38
August	2003	32
September	2003	22
October	2003	40
November	2003	15
December	2003	30
January	2004	15
February	2004	31
March	2004	38
April	2004	25
May	2004	28
June	2004	33
July	2004	22
August	2004	22
September	2004	24
October	2004	24

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners in 2003 began training, education or offender behaviour programmes but were unable to complete these courses due *(a)* to transfer to another establishment and *(b)* release from custody. [201037]

Paul Goggins: In 2003–04 there were approximately 9,600 commencements of accredited offending behaviour programmes excluding drug programmes. Of the 8,034 commencements of general offending behaviour programmes—Enhanced Thinking Skills and Reasoning and Rehabilitation—106 prisoners (1.3 per cent.) did not complete because they were transferred and 12 (0.1 per cent.) did not complete because they were released. The percentage of prisoners not completing other accredited offending behaviour programmes for these reasons would have been similar or lower.

Equivalent information on non-completion is not available for prisoners' training or education programmes.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the development costs were of the Democratic Therapeutic Community Core Model to *(a)* public sector and *(b)* private sector prison operators. [201054]

Paul Goggins: The Democratic Therapeutic Community (TC) Core Model was developed by a working group drawn from across public and private sector prisons.

The Therapeutic Community Policy Manager in Prison Service Headquarters facilitated this development work and managed a central annual budget of £129,000 which was used to support the accreditation process. This included the provision of training and resources for staff, the commissioning of a consultant to undertake a literature review to underpin the core model, the provision of additional psychometric materials to TCs and other related costs.

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many drug-related deaths have occurred among inmates in prisons in England and Wales in each of the last three years. [202730]

Paul Goggins: Two deaths in 2001, eight in 2002 and six in 2003 appeared to be drug-related.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners were held *(a)* two to a cell designed for one and *(b)* three to a cell designed for two at the latest date for which figures are available; and how many category C and D prisoners are being housed in dormitory accommodation. [202996]

Paul Goggins: At the end of October 2004 16,889 prisoners were held two to a cell designed for one, while 1,034 prisoners were held three to a cell designed for two. The data in this answer are provisional and subject to validation by prisons.

The Prison Service does not collect centrally the details of the number of category C and D prisoners who are placed in dormitory accommodation.

Prisons

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether penalties are imposed on contracted out prisons for exceeding overcrowding limits. [202997]

Paul Goggins: Each of the nine contracts for prisons managed by the private sector under the private finance initiative contain provision for penalising the contractor financially if the agreed overcrowding limit is exceeded. The contracts for two further prisons, HMP Doncaster and HMP Wolds, which are operated by the private sector following a market test, do not contain this provision.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department who the governor of each prison is; how old each will be on 1 January 2005; on what date each joined the Prison Service; how long each has been a governor; and when each is expected to retire. [203723]

Paul Goggins: The names of governors in public sector prisons, their length of service as governing governor and their start date with the Prison Service is contained in the following table. Staffing information for privately managed prisons is considered commercial in confidence and is therefore not included. The information requested about age and retirement is considered personal information and could only be provided with the consent of the individuals concerned.

Governing governor as at 8 December 2004	*Current establishment.*	*Total time as governing governor in months*	*Start date in Prison Service*
Mike Kirby	Acklington	111	26 May1980
Mel Jones	Albany	32	23 September 1985
Chris Di Paolo	Ashwell	9	24 September 1984
Dawn Elaine	Askham Grange	39	22 October 1990
David Kennedy	Aylesbury	49	12 March 1979
Guy Baulf	Bedford	10	15 July 1985

Governing governor as at 8 December 2004	*Current establishment.*	*Total time as governing governor in months*	*Start date in Prison Service*
Geoff Hughes	Belmarsh	65	28 September 1981
Mike Shann	Birmingham	79	8 May1967
Ferdie Parker	Blakenhurst	18	5 October 1987
Kieron Taylor	Blantyre House	2	17 August 1981
Teresa Clarke	Blundeston	20	22 November 1990
Tom Watson	Brinsford	46	29 April 1974
Mick Bell	Bristol	43	4 April 1977
John Podmore	Brixton	49	1 September 1985
Barbara Treen	Brockhill	31	10 October 1983
Sue Morrison	Buckley Hall	32	28 September 1981
Sue Saunders	Bullingdon	31	3 April 1989
Mukhtar Poselay	Bullwood Hall	3	21 August 1972
Bob Bennett	Camp Hill	87	6 July 1968
Helen Rinaldi	Canterbury	32	14 January 1985
Paul Tidball	Cardiff	93	27 September 1976
Matt Spencer	Castington	11	16 November 1987
Nick Evans	Channings Wood	92	27 September 1976
Steve Rodford	Chelmsford	16	25 July 1988
Paul McDowell	Coldingley	11	29 May1990
Ed Tullett	Cookham Wood	12	25 April 1979
Claudia Sturt	Dartmoor	17	21 September 1992
Alan Tallentire	Deerbolt	24	8 May1984
Steve Holland	Dorchester	32	30 September 1991
Val Whitecross	Dover	25	28 September 1981
Peter Dawson	Downview	9	1 October 1984
John Huntingdon	Drake Hall	16	25 February 1980
Mike Newell	Durham	105	5 August 1974
Robin Carter	East Sutton Park	70	1 March 1983
Tim Beeston	Eastwood Park	67	22 October 1984
Norma King	Edmunds Hill	3	15 August 1988
Chris Bartlett	Elmley	55	23 September 1985
Clive Broom	Eriestoke	14	18 January 1988
Amy Rice	Everthorpe	20	11 September 1995
Ian Mulholland	Exeter	34	14 May1990
Mike Bolton	Featherstone	55	29 May1984
Andrew Cross	Feltham	50	12 August 1985
Fiona Radford	Ford	13	23 September 1985
Paddy Scriven	[Foston Hall	95	29 October 1973
Phil Copple	Frankland	57	1 October 1990
Bob Mullen	Full Sutton	75	27 September 1982
Bob McColm	Garth	39	1 August 1975
Rannoch Daly	Gartree	95	1 August 1972
Brian Edwards	Glen Parva	34	3 January 1972
David Chalmers	Gloucester	44	20 May1974
Peter Bennett	Grendon	51	26 September 1983
Barry Greenberry	Guys Marsh	47	22 October 1984
Carole Draper	Haslar	10	1 September 1984
Sue McCullagh	Haverigg	21	16 November 1981
Alison Gomme	Hewell Grange	68	22 September 1980
Sian West	Highdown	61	30 June 1987
Sue Doolan	Highpoint	53	28 September 1981
Jayne Blake	Hindley	61	28 October 1974
Michael Wood	Hollesley Bay	23	9 September 1974
Tony Hassall	Holloway	37	25 June 1990
Mick Lees	Holme House	93	12 February 1979
Steve Tilley	Hull	46	2 October 1978
Elaine Jones	Huntercombe	35	19 March 1979
John Robinson	Kingston	56	1 November 1982
Steve Lawrence	Kirkham	21	7 May1985
Alan Richer	Kirklevington	30	28 September 1982
Derek Harrison	Lancaster Castle	14	1 January 1991
Terry Williams	Lancaster Farms	18	20 July 1992
Terry Hinchliffe	Latchmere House	77	10 February 1969
Ian Blakeman	Leeds	23	25 September 1989
Steve Turner	Leicester	15	28 April 1975
Eoin McLennan-Murray	Lewes	14	25 September 1978
Richard Booty	Leyhill	65	23 September 1985
Lynne Saunders	Lincoln	8	21 September 1992
Martin Ward	Lindholme	44	25 March 1974
Julia Morgan	Uttlehey	47	25 September 1978
Cathy James .	Liverpool	60	22 October 1984
Nick Leader	Long Lartin	40	23 September 1985
Vacant/Advertised	Low Newton	—	—

Governing governor as at 8 December 2004	*Current establishment.*	*Total time as governing governor in months*	*Start date in Prison Service*
Jane Galbally	Maidstone	77	27 September 1976
Chris Sheffield	Manchester	68	29 September 1980
Jacqui Tilley	Moorland	24	20 December 1980
Damian Evans	Morton Hall	6	16 September 1992
Sara Snell	New Hall	47	25 September 1989
K Beaumont	North Sea Camp	77	29 September 1980
Bill Shaw	Northallerton	37	9 July 1979
James Shanley	Norwich	27	8 August 1983
Wendy Sinclair-Gieben	Nottingham	2	29 June 98
Alison Perry	Onley	8	23 September 1985
Steve Metcalf	Parkhurst	51	12 October 1970
Gareth Davies	Pentonville	122	1 January 1980
Steve Twinn	Portland	22	3 September 1968
Alan Brown	Preston	29	27 March 1972
Phil Wragg	Ranby	29	20 July 1987
Pauline Bryant	Reading	7	8 December 1986
Paul Norbury	Risley	47	28 September 1982
Stephen O'Connell	Rochester	3	30 March 1987
Brian Ritchie	Send	23	27 September 1971
Bryan McAlley Suspended (Suzy Dymond-Whlte t/p D)	Shepton Mallet	43	6 September 1979
Vacant/Advertised	Shrewsbury	—	—
Louise Taylor	Stafford	53	28 September 1981
John Wilson	Standford Hill	13	8 May1978
Moira Barlett	Stocken	15	29 September 1980
Peter Small	Stoke Heath	11	13 August 1990
Steve Hall	Styal	10	25 September 1989
Chris Dávidson	Sudbury	75	26 September 1977
Tony Robson	Swaleside	66	28 September 1982
Phil Taylor	Swansea	22	31 July 1978
Peter Knapton	Swinfen Hall	29	5 May1975
Paul Wailen	The Mount	97	24 September 1973
Mike Cook	The Verne	66	24 September 1979
Give Chatterton	Thorn Cross	4	8 September 1975
Phil Morgan	Usk/Prescoed	19	8 August 1977
Dave Thompson	Wakefield	38	25 February 1980
Jim Heavens	Wandsworth	64	24 September 1984
Stuart Robinson	Warren Hill	54	30 September 1968
Vacant/Advertised	Wayland	—	—
Governor in post 9 January 2005	Wealstun	—	—
Denise Calvert	Weare	67	23 September 1985
Jim Lewis	Wellingborough	26	12 May1986
Frank Flynn	Werrington	23	6 September 1976
Paul Foweather	Wetherby	10	8 September 1985
Viv Hart	Whatton	72	26 September 1983
Martin Lomas	Whitemoor	19	23 September 1985
Cathy Allison	Winchester	39	29 September 1986
Edd Willetts	Woodhill	56	29 September 1980
Luke Serjeant	Wormwood Scrubs	50	10 October 1983
Alan Scott	Wymott	67	26 September 1983

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many offenders were held in prison awaiting deportation at 1 December, broken down by *(a)* those who have been awaiting deportation for (i) one week, (ii) two to four weeks, (iii) four to eight weeks, (iv) eight to 12 weeks and (v) more than 12 weeks and *(b)* nationality. [203734]

Mr. Browne *[holding answer 13 December 2004]*: Information on the number of people who were detained in prison establishments awaiting deportation after completion of a criminal sentence is not available.

Work is on-going to improve the quality of data held on those people detained under Immigration Act powers in Prison Service establishments.

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what criteria were used when making the decision to allow advertisements in Prison Catering by HM Prison Service; what revenue was raised from advertising in the last issue; and what the total cost was of the publication of that issue. [203893]

Paul Goggins: The "Prison Catering' magazine was a partnership arrangement between the Prison Service and Cost Sector Catering magazine published by Dewberry Boyes. The magazine was published and distributed in support of the Prison Services national catering workshop. The aim was to promote, to a wider public sector audience, some of the work and challenges being taken forward and tackled within Prison Service catering.

The criteria for advertisements set by the Prison Service required all advertisers to either hold a government contract or deliver to a government contract. Publication of the magazine was at no cost to the public purse and no income was generated for the

Prison Service. The cost of the publication was borne by the publishers who also received the revenue raised from advertising. In addition to the publication Dewberry Boyes also organised the workshop venue.

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many London prisons have a visitor centre that provides child care facilities; and if he will make a statement. [204100]

Paul Goggins: Supervised child care facilities are provided in the main visits area at Belmarsh, Holloway, Pentonville and Wormwood Scrubs. Wandsworth provides seating in booths where prisoners, their partners and children can enjoy a visit in an area that has been specially designed to meet the needs of young children. The feasibility of providing a crèche is under consideration at Feltham.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department who is responsible for taking the final decision on the location for the building of new prisons. [204421]

Paul Goggins: The Secretary of State for the Home Department makes the final decision on the location of new prisons, subject to the planning process.

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department on how many occasions in the last year for which figures are available an individual in the *(a)* Prison Service, *(b)* Probation Service and *(c)* Metropolitan Police has been suspended for dishonestly claiming an allowance; and how many were reinstated after repaying the money. [204424]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 13 December 2004]*: From the information held centrally by the Prison Service, no member of staff has been suspended for dishonestly claiming an allowance. For the National Probation Service, this information is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

In the Metropolitan Police and from information available, one member of staff has been dismissed and has not been reinstated. Additionally one has also been reprimanded in relation to dishonestly claiming non police allowances.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) why the Prison Service did not accept the recommendation of the review of the installation of sprinklers that sprinklers should be installed in all prisons and detention centres; [199794]

(2) what criteria are used to decide whether sprinkler equipment should be installed in prisons and detention centres; [199791]

(3) if he will estimate *(a)* how long it would take and *(b)* how much it would cost to install sprinkler equipment in all prisons and detention centres; [199798]

(4) how many prisons are fitted with sprinkler equipment; and which areas of each prison are protected by the sprinkler system. [199790]

Paul Goggins: The only formal review that the Prison Service is aware of relating to sprinklers was in respect of Immigration Centres. In the light of this review the Prison Service undertook technical assessments and testing of non-ligature secure sprinkler heads, as part of a continuing review of fire safety in the prison estate. No conclusions have yet been reached.

An independent Fire Safety Survey and Review is currently being undertaken on behalf of the Prison Service by the Building Research Establishment (Fire) across the prison estate (public and private) which will include an assessment of the suitability, or otherwise, of sprinkler systems and other appropriate fire detection/management systems.

The cost and time to install sprinklers is dependent upon the availability of the cell areas in which sprinklers would be installed. An initial Prison Service estimate of the cost to provide sprinklers is in excess of £125 million. Owing to population pressures and the need for major decanting and relocation of prisoners to facilitate a national installation programme installation would take many years, possibly several decades.

The Weare (a floating facility with shore facilities) is the only prison establishment fitted with sprinklers in accommodation areas. Many other establishments have sprinkler systems installed in high-risk areas, which include parts of kitchens and parts of workshops.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many vacancies there were in each prison establishment for *(a)* prison officers and *(b)* other prison staff as at 1 November. [199558]

Paul Goggins: The most recent information on staff vacancies against operational staffing requirement is at 30 September 2004. For each public sector prison establishment this is contained in the following table. The figures represent a snapshot of staffing at establishment level and do not take into account new staff who were still in the recruitment process on 30 September.

Staff vacancies at prisons and young offender institutes at 30 June 2003[1]

Establishment	*Officers grades*	*Other staff*
Acklington	-7	—
Albany	-8	—
Ashwell	-3	-14
Askham Grange	-2	-3
Aylesbury	-15	—
Bedford	-18	-10
Belmarsh	-34	-31
Birmingham	-18	-5
Blakenhurst	—	—
Blantyre House	-3	—
Blundeston	—	-5
Brinsford	-24	-17
Bristol	-15	-1
Brixton	-8	—
Brockhill	-7	-7
Buckley Hall	-4	—
Bullingdon	-19	-34
Bullwood Hall	-10	—

Staff vacancies at prisons and young offender institutes at 30 June 2003[1]

Establishment	*Officers grades*	*Other staff*
Camp Hill	-3	—
Canterbury	—	-13
Cardiff	—	-10
Castington	-6	-5
Channings Wood	—	-2
Chelmsford	-10	-2
Coldingley	-10	-1
Cookham Wood	-4	—
Dartmoor	-2	-0
Deerbolt	—	-4
Dorchester	-9	—
Dover	-1	-14
Downview	-19	—
Drake Hall	-7	—
Durham	-16	-10
East Sutton Park	—	-1
Eastwood Park	-5	-34
Edmunds Hill	-12	-19
Elmley	—	-8
Erlestoke	-3	-30
Everthorpe	—	—
Exeter	-1	-7
Featherstone	—	—
Feltham	-75	—
Ford	-3	-7
Foston Hall	-10	-21
Frankland	-29	—
Full Button	-11	-25
Garth	-5	—
Gartree	-8	-14
Glen Pan/a	-15	-14
Gloucester	-10	-9
Grendon	-18	—
Guys Marsh	-4	-2
Haslar	-1	-6
Haverigg	-10	-1
Hewell Grange	—	-2
High Down	-16	—
Highpoint	-9	-19
Hindley	-18	—
Hollesley Bay	-0	-2
Holloway	-17	—
Holme House	-1	-16
Hull	-7	-13
Huntercombe	-13	-12
Kingston	-3	—
Kirkham	-5	-3
Kirklevington Grange	—	-0
Lancaster	-3	-8
Lancaster Farms	-7	-5
Latch mere House	-4	-2
Leeds	—	-15
Leicester	-15	—
Lewes	-8	-12
Leyhill	-6	-16
Lincoln	-2	-18
Lindholme	-1	—
Littlehey	-9	-18
Liverpool	—	-18
Long Lartin	-13	-14
Low Newton	-5	—
Maidstone	-9	-13
Manchester	-44	-27
Moorland	-4	-6
Morton Hall	—	—
New Hall	-9	-3
North Sea Camp	-2	-10
Northallerton	—	-4
Norwich	-5	-24
Nottingham	—	-0
Onley	-9	-15
Parkhurst	-15	-22
Pentonville	-25	—
Portland	-8	-10
Preston	-2	—
Ran by	-14	—
Reading	-4	—
Risley	-7	-5
Rochester	-2	-16
Send	-15	-12
Shepton Mallet	-2	-4
Shrewsbury	-6	—
Stafford	-0	—
Standford Hill	-1	-9
Stocken	-2	-5
Stoke Heath	-18	—
Styal	-4	-9
Sudbury	-2	-4
Swaleside	—	-4
Swansea	-4	-1
Swinfen Hall	-15	-19
The Mount	-11	-6
The Verne	—	—
Thorn Cross	-1	—
Usk/Prescoed	—	-6
Wakefield	-4	-9
Wandsworth	-35	-1
Warren Hill	-8	-2
Wayland	-3	-8
Wealstun	-6	—
Weare	-2	-2
Wellingborough	-38	-47
Werrington	-5	-4
Wetherby	-13	—
Whatton	—	-15
Whitemoor	-17	-63
Winchester	-4	-10
Woodhill	-9	-27
Wormwood Scrubs	-14	—
Wymott	-5	-26
Total	-1,061	-1029

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[1] Figures do not take into account all new staff who were still in the recruitment at 30 September 2004

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has for private companies who run prisons in England and Wales to be given additional responsibilities, including enhanced disciplinary powers. [204891]

Paul Goggins: In the Management of Offenders and Sentencing Bill we are proposing to transfer to directors of private prisons additional powers concerning the segregation, control and punishment of prisoners.

We also propose minor changes to the search and detention powers of a Prison Custody Officer, giving them broadly equivalent powers to public sector prison officers.

Probation Service

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what plans he has to second offender managers from local probation services to work for regional offender managers; and if he will make a statement; [203830]

(2) what plans he has for offender managers employed by probation areas in England and Wales to work for regional offender managers via service level agreements; and if he will make a statement. [203831]

Paul Goggins: Various options relating to the transfer of responsibility for Offender Managers are under consideration. A decision will be announced in due course.

Mr. Gerrard: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the total number of *(a)* staff, *(b)* probation officers, *(c)* Probation Service officers and *(d)* local support staff working in the Probation Service in England and Wales was on (i) 1 April 2001, (ii) 1 April 2002, (iii) 1 April 2003, (iv) 1 April 2004 and (v) 30 September 2004. [201622]

Paul Goggins: The information requested is as follows.

England and Wales

	Probation staff1,2	*(i) 31 December 2001*	*(ii) 31 December 2002*	*(iii) 1 April 2003*	*(iv) 1 April 2004*	*(v) 30 September 2004*
(a)	All staff	16,615	17,285	17,752	19,237	19,128
(b)	Probation officers[3]	7,134	7,532	7,351	8,106	7,992
(c)	Probation service officers	3,566	4,083	4,752	5,417	5,513
(d)	Local support staff[4]	5,915	5,670	5,649	5,714	5,623

[1] Figures shown as FTE.

[2] Prior to April 2003, all data were collected by the Home Office RDS Unit in December of each year, and therefore no actual data are available for April 2001 and 2002. Actual data collection date of the data from 2003 onwards is 31 March.

[3] Figures include Senior Probation Officers, Senior Practitioners, Probation Officers, Trainee Probation Officers.

[4] Figures include all other staff employed within the Probation Service excluding those listed in 3 above and Probation Service Officers.

Mr. Gerrard: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many vacancies there were in the Probation Service on *(a)* 1 April 2001, *(b)* 1 April 2002, *(c)* 1 April 2003, *(d)* 1 April 2004 and *(e)* 30 September 2004. [201623]

Paul Goggins: The information requested is as follows:

Probation staff[1,2]: number of vacancies[3,4]

England and Wales

	Number	*Percentage*
31 December 2001	[5]—	[5]—
31 December 2002	[5]—	[5]—
1 April 2003[6]	1,059.9	5.6
1 April 2004[6]	1,010.3	5.0
30 September 2004[7]	758.9	3.9

[1] Figures shown as FTE.

[2] Prior to April 2003, all data were collected by the Home Office RDS Unit in December of each year, and therefore no actual data are available for April 2001 and 2002. Actual data collection date of the data from 2003 onwards is 31 March.

[3] Figures quoted for April 2003 and April 2004 are net vacancy levels. This figure takes into account any areas where staff may have been recruited over-establishment at one level to cover vacancies at another level. This may be necessary where difficulties arise in recruitment into these posts.

[4] From April 2004 onwards, the vacancy information collected changed and reflected those vacancies that areas were actively recruiting staff into.

[5] Vacancy information not collected at this time.

[6] Vacancy figures are calculated against a notional complement of staff.

[7] Figures issued prior to publication and may alter slightly when published in Issue 05 of the Workforce Information Report due to some outstanding queries awaiting responses.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many days sick were taken on average per employee in the National Probation Service during *(a)* 2003–04 and *(b)* April to September 2004. [203869]

Paul Goggins: The average number of days absent due to sickness per member of staff in the National Probation Service in each of the years since 2003–04 is shown in the table.

	Average days of absence due to sickness
2003–04	12.3
2004–05 (April-September)	11.5

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department by how much Basic Skills Commencements for the National Probation Service changed *(a)* during 2003–04 and *(b)* between April to September 2004. [203870]

Paul Goggins: The performance of the National Probation Service on basic skills commencements in 2003–04 and between April and September 2004–05 is shown in the table. It shows a 22 percentage point increase between the two periods based on the proportion of the target delivered in each period.

	2003–04		*April to September 2004–05*		
Basic Skills	*Target*	*Achieved*	*Target*	*Achieved*	*Percentage point change*
Commencements	16,000	14,971 (94%)	11,520	13,353(116%)	+22%

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of victims were contacted by the National Probation Service during the required timescale during *(a)* 2003–04 and *(b)* April to September 2004. [203871]

Paul Goggins: The National Probation Service contacted 91 per cent. of victims within the required timescale in 2003–04 and 93 per cent. within the required timescale in the first quarter of 2004–05. This is against a target of 85 per cent.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the performance of the National Probation Service on *(a)* Basic Skills Awards and *(b)* Basic Skills Commencements against its targets improved (i) during 2003–04 and (ii) between April and September 2004. [203873]

Paul Goggins: The performance of the National Probation Service on basic skills awards and commencements in 2003–04 and between April and September 2004 is shown in the table which demonstrates a significant improvement between the two periods.

Table 1: Basic Skills Performance

Basic Skills	*2003–04* *Target*	*Achieved*	*April to September 2004–05* *Target*	*Achieved*	*Percentage point change*
Commencements	16,000	14,971 (94%)	11 ,520	13,353(116%)	+22%
Awards	4,000	2,815(70%)	2,960	3,302(112%)	+42%

Ross Cranston: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of probation areas *(a)* met and *(b)* exceeded the 90 per cent. breach target within 10 days in each year since 2001; and what progress the National Probation Service has made on breach targets since April 2001. [204121]

Paul Goggins: The proportion of areas meeting or exceeding the 90 per cent. target to breach within 10 working days those offenders that have breached the conditions of their orders or licenses is shown in the table.

	Number of areas	*Percentage of areas*
2001–02	1	2
2002–03	6	14
2003–04	13	31
2004–05 (April-September)	22	52

Ross Cranston: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many probation areas exceeded their profile targets in respect of accredited programmes between April and September 2004. [204122]

Paul Goggins: The number of probation areas exceeding their profiled target of accredited programme completions between April and September 2004 was 18 out of 42 areas.

Julie Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average number of days of sick leave absence was for Probation staff in England and Wales *(a)* in 2003–04 and *(b)* for the first six months of 2004–05, broken down by (i) long-term and (ii) short-term sickness. [204130]

Paul Goggins: The average number of days absent due to sickness per member of staff in the National Probation Service in 2003–04 and for the first six months of 2004–05 is shown in the table.

	Short term	*Long term*	*DDA-related*	*Total*
2003–04	6.2	5.8	0.3	12.3
2004–05 (April-September)	5.3	6.0	0.3	11.5

Note:

DDA = Disability Discrimination

Julie Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what change there has been in the rate of absence due to sickness in the Probation Service in England and Wales in the last three years. [204131]

Paul Goggins: The average number of days absent due to sickness per member of staff in the National Probation Service in each of the years since 2002–03 is shown in the table.

	Average days sickness absence
2002–03	11.9
2003–04	12.3
2004–05 (April to September)	11.5

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what consultation will occur with stakeholders before further restructuring of the Probation Service in England and Wales is put in place. [204889]

Paul Goggins: Consultation with all stakeholders, including staff, will continue as part of the development of the National Offender Management Service. There are no specific consultation exercises planned at the present time.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many vacancies there are at each grade in each probation area in England and Wales at the latest date available. [204893]

Paul Goggins: The information requested is as follows.

	Senior Probation Officer	*Senior Practitioner*	*Probation Officer*	*Trainee Probation Officer*	*Probation Service Officer*
Avon and Somerset	1.60	3.00	14.20	0.00	19.30
Bedfordshire	0.00	1.00	3.00	0.00	0.00
Cambridgeshire	0.50	0.00	3.70	0.00	5.43
Cheshire	1.00	0.00	7.70	0.00	17.30
Cumbria	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	2.00
Derbyshire	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Devon and Cornwall	1.50	1.00	2.80	0.00	8.00
Dorset	2.00	0.00	5.00	1.00	4.60
Durham	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Dyfed Powys	0.00	2.00	1.40	0.00	3.40
Essex	0.00	1.00	4.50	0.00	7.00
Gloucestershire	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.23
Gwent	0.00	1.00	5.00	0.00	3.00
Hampshire	0.00	0.00	3.73	0.00	1.00
Hertfordshire	1.00	2.20	3.90	3.00	2.40
Humberside	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Kent	1.00	7.60	7.50	0.00	3.00
Lancashire	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Leicestershire and Rutland	2.70	2.00	5.80	0.00	4.00
Lincolnshire	1.50	0.00	7.00	1.00	6.20
London	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Greater Manchester	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Merseyside	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Norfolk	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
North Yorkshire	0.00	3.00	4.80	3.00	0.50
North Wales	0.00	0.00	3.00	0.00	8.00
Northamptonshire	3.00	0.00	6.00	0.00	5.00
Northumbria	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Nottinghamshire	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	9.70
South Wales	3.00	0.00	32.50	22.00	31.30
South Yorkshire	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Staffordshire	1.00	0.00	7.70	0.00	7.00
Suffolk	0.00	0.00	2.90	0.00	3.36
Surrey	1.00	1.00	6.00	8.00	24.40
Sussex	0.10	1.50	7.40	0.00	15.60
Teesside	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	2.00
Thames Valley	4.50	0.00	12.00	0.00	14.40
Warwickshire	2.20	1.20	1.00	0.00	2.90
West Mercia	0.00	3.36	7.50	0.00	7.91
West Midlands	0.00	0.00	12.80	0.00	11.50
West Yorkshire	4.00	3.50	17.50	4.00	29.80
Wiltshire	0.00	0.00	3.00	0.00	5.00
Total	32.60	34.36	202.33	43.00	267.23

	Psychologists	*Other Operational Staff*	*Deputy Chief Officer/ Equivalent*	*Assistant Chief Officer/ Equivalent*	*Area/ District Managers/ Equivalent*
Avon and Somerset	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.00
Bedfordshire	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Cambridgeshire	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Cheshire	0.00	3.50	0.00	0.00	0.00
Cumbria	0.00	2.50	0.00	0.00	0.00
Derbyshire	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Devon and Cornwall	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Dorset	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Durham	2.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Dyfed Powys	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Essex	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Gloucestershire	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Gwent	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Hampshire	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Hertfordshire	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Humberside	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Kent	0.00	1.00	0.00	2.00	0.00
Lancashire	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Leicestershire and Rutland	0.00	3.30	0.00	0.00	0.00
Lincolnshire	0.00	1.10	0.00	0.00	0.00
London	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Greater Manchester	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

	Psychologists	Other Operational Staff	Deputy Chief Officer/ Equivalent	Assistant Chief Officer/ Equivalent	Area/ District Managers/ Equivalent
Merseyside	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00
Norfolk	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
North Yorkshire	0.00	1.60	0.00	2.30	0.00
North Wales	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Northamptonshire	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Northumbria	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Nottinghamshire	0.00	3.10	0.00	0.00	0.00
South Wales	0.00	5.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
South Yorkshire	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Staffordshire	0.00	0.90	0.00	0.00	0.00
Suffolk	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Surrey	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Sussex	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Teesside	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Thames Valley	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00
Warwickshire	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
West Mercia	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
West Midlands	0.00	25.97	0.00	0.00	0.00
West Yorkshire	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Wiltshire	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00
Total	2.00	48.97	1.00	5.30	3.00

	Managers-Section or Function Head	Support Staff Admin	Support Staff Other	Other Specialist Worker	Total
Avon and Somerset	0.80	13.10	2.40	0.00	56.40
Bedfordshire	0.00	1.67	3.00	0.00	8.67
Cambridgeshire	0.58	3.28	0.00	0.00	13.49
Cheshire	0.00	0.00	0.00	0..00	29.50
Cumbria	0.00	3.50	0.00	0.00	9.00
Derbyshire	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Devon and Cornwall	0.00	6.60	0.00	0.00	19.90
Dorset	0.00	4.10	0.00	0.00	16.70
Durham	0.00	3.00	0.00	0.00	8.00
Dyfed Powys	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	6.80
Essex	0.00	7.00	0.10	0.00	19.60
Gloucestershire	0.00	0.29	0.00	0.00	1.52
Gwent	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	9.00
Hampshire	0.00	2.00	0.00	1.00	8.73
Hertfordshire	0.00	1.00	3.40	0.00	16.90
Humberside	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Kent	0.00	4.43	0.00	0.00	26.53
Lancashire	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Leicestershire and Rutland	0.00	2.00	0.00	0.00	19.80
Lincolnshire	0.30	7.00	0.00	0.00	24.10
London	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Greater Manchester	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Merseyside	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00
Norfolk	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
North Yorkshire	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	15.20
North Wales	0.00	3.10	0.00	0.00	14.10
Northamptonshire	3.00	3.00	1.00	0.00	18.00
Northumbria	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Nottinghamshire	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	12.80
South Wales	0.00	2.00	10.00	0.00	102.80
South Yorkshire	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Staffordshire	0.00	2.30	0.00	0.00	17.90
Suffolk	0.50	2.60	0.00	1.00	10.36
Surrey	0.00	5.10	0.00	0.00	44.50
Sussex	0.00	0.00	1.50	1.00	27.00
Teesside	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3.00
Thames Valley	0.00	11.00	2.00	0.00	40.40
Warwickshire	0.00	1.40	0.00	0.00	6.50
West Mercia	0.10	8.06	0.00	0.00	26.93
West Midlands	0.00	16.40	0.00	0.00	66.67
West Yorkshire	0.00	19.50	0.00	0.00	74.30
Wiltshire	0.00	5.50	0.00	0.00	14.50
Total	5.28	138.93	23.40	3.00	777.80

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether a Business Case has been commissioned in respect of the purchaser/provider model which has been advanced for the National Probation Service. [205711]

Paul Goggins: The detailed Business Case for the National Offender Management Service Change Programme, which is currently being prepared, will include a full explanation of any proposed purchaser/provider model.

Mr. Gerrard: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the change was in the performance of the National Probation Service against its performance measures on *(a)* compliance, including orders which are allowed to continue and *(b)* offender behaviour programmes (i) during 2003–04 and (ii) between April and September. [206150]

Paul Goggins: *(a)* Compliance. The tables set out the compliance figures achieved by the National Probation Service in 2003–04 and in April to September 2004.

Table 1: 2003–04 (Percentage)

Month	*(a) Compliance: Orders and licences*	*(b) Compliance: Orders only*
April 2003	63	56
May2003	62	54
June 2003	61	53
July 2003	64	58
August 2003	62	56
September 2003	61	55
October 2003	63	57
November 2003	61	55
December 2003	62	56
January 2004	62	56
February 2004	65	57
March 2004	62	56
Total	62	56

Table 2: 2004–05 (Percentage)

Month	*(a) Compliance: Orders and licences*	*(b) Compliance Orders only:*	*(c) Compliance: Orders and licences including those breached and allowed to continue*	*(d) Compliance: Orders only including those breached and allowed to continue*
April 2004	63	57	—	—
May 2004	66	59	79	76
June 2004	67	59	80	76
July 2004	67	61	79	76
August 2004	64	58	78	75
September 2004	64	58	79	76
Total	65	59	79	76

Compliance was originally defined as the proportion of orders with no second unacceptable failure to comply (no third in licence cases). The results on this basis for 2003–04 and April-September 2004 are shown in Tables 1 and 2 for *(a)* orders and licences combined and *(b)* for orders alone. Both show that compliance has improved by three percentage points in 2004–05 compared to the previous year.

Since May 2004, compliance has been measured on a wider definition that includes orders which have been allowed to continue by the courts following breach action by the NPS. Columns *(c)* and *(d)* of Table 2 show the results to the end of September. On this basis, NPS is exceeding the target of 70 per cent., having achieved 79 per cent. compliance for orders and licences combined and 76 per cent. for orders alone.

(b) Offending Behaviour Programmes. The tables set out the number of completions of offending behaviour programmes achieved by the National Probation Service during 2003–04 and in April to September 2004. These are set against the monthly profiled targets (i.e. the number of completions expected at the end of each month). The data is presented cumulatively to show progress towards the annual target which was 15,000 in each year.

Awards for 2003–04

	Actual	*Profile*	*Percentage*
April 2003	978	943	104
May 2003	1,759	1,886	93
June 2003	2,706	2,829	96
July 2003	3,737	4,001	93
August 2003	4,675	5,019	93
September 2003	5,693	6,091	93
October 2003	6,785	7,514	90
November 2003	7,873	8,738	90
December 2003	9,188	10,457	88
January 2004	9,972	11,452	87
February 2004	11,087	12,959	86
March 2004	13,130	15,000	88

Awards for 2004–05

	Actual	*Profile*	*Percentage*
April 2004	852	1,250	68
May 2004	1,811	2,500	72
June 2004	3037	3,750	81
July 2004	4443	5,000	89
August 2004	5629	6,250	90
September 2004	6827	7,500	91
October 2004	—	8,750	—
November 2004	—	10,000	—
December 2004	—	11,250	—
January 2005	—	12,500	—
February 2005	—	13,750	—
March 2005	—	15,000	—

Mr. Gerrard: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the National Probation Service met its performance measure on Enhanced

Community Punishment during the period April to September; and how performance compared with the target set for that period. [206151]

Paul Goggins: The National Probation Service (NPS) has set an annual target of 30,000 Enhanced Community Punishment (ECP) completions for 2004–05. Between April and September 2004–05 the NPS achieved 17,158 ECP completions which, against a profiled target of 11,850 represents a performance against target of 148 per cent.

Mr. Gerrard: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the change was in the performance of the National Probation Service against its performance measure on drug treatment and testing order commencements between April and September. [206152]

Paul Goggins: The National Probation Service (NPS) has set an annual target of 13,000 Drug treatment and Testing Orders (DTTOs) for 2004–05. In 2003–04, the target was 9,000 and the NPS achieved 8,519 (just 5 per cent. short of the target). Between April and September 2004–05 the NPS achieved 4,847 DTTO commencements which, against a profiled target of 6,078 represents a performance against target of 80 per cent. The table shows the monthly cumulative performance against target for 2004–05.

Awards	*April 2003*	*May 2003*	*June 2003*	*July 2003*	*August 2003*	*September 2003*
Actual	812	1,579	2,390	3,201	4,009	4,847
Profile	926	1,856	2,861	4,003	5,017	6,078
Percent	88	85	84	80	80	80

Awards	*October 2003*	*November 20 03*	*December 20 03*	*January 2003*	*February 2004*	*March 2004*
Actual	—	—	—	—	—	—
Profile	7,259	8,320	9,405	10,432	11,596	13,000
Percent	—	—	—	—	—	—

Mr. Gerrard: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the change was in the drug treatment and testing order target for the National Probation Service from 2003–04 to 2004–05. [206153]

Paul Goggins: The commencement target for Drug Treatment and Testing Orders (DTTOs) across the National Probation Service increased from 9,000 orders in 2003–04 to13,000 orders (including 1,000 of the new lower intensity variant) in 2004–05. In addition, a completion target for 2004–05 of 35 per cent. was introduced from April 2004.

Proceeds of Crime

Mr. Grieve: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much has been recovered under civil recovery proceedings brought under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 since the Act came into force. [206802]

Caroline Flint: The total amount recovered by civil recovery proceedings brought under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 is £5,309,000. I understand the Assets Recovery Agency expects to meet its target of £10 million on receipts from civil recovery in 2004–05.

Protection from Harassment Act

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many magistrates court prosecutions under section 2 of the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 resulted in *(a)* conviction and *(b)* acquittal in (i) 2001, (ii) 2002 and (iii) 2003, broken down by sex. [201029]

Paul Goggins: The information contained in the table gives the number of persons, by sex, proceeded against, found guilty, acquitted at magistrates courts for offences under section 2 of the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, England and Wales 2001 to 2003.

Number of persons proceeded against, found guilty, acquitted at magistrates courts for offences under section 2 of the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 [1]*, England and Wales 2001 to 2003*

Sex	*Proceeded against*[2]	*Found guilty*	*Acquitted*[3]
2001			
Male	5,014	2,377	385
Female	859	320	69
Total	5,873	2,697	454
2002			
Male	5,008	2,422	443
Female	833	328	74
Total	5,841	2,750	517
2003			
Male	5,075	2,572	336
Female	816	322	68
Total	5,891	2,894	404

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis.

[2] Those defendants who were proceeded against but were neither found guilty not acquitted were either committed to the Crown court for trial or had their cases terminated early.

[3] Includes discharged and dismissed.

Rape Drugs

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which police forces are using the early evidence kits for detection of drugs that may have been used to assist a rape. [199965]

Paul Goggins: The following list shows those police forces currently purchasing the early evidence kit from Scenesafe, part of the Forensic Science Service.

Other police forces are known to use alternative versions of the early evidence kit by buying separate urine collection and mouth swabbing kits from other suppliers. If a police force does not appear in the following list, this does not mean that they do not have the appropriate materials to collect the early evidence crucial in detecting drugs used to assist a rape.

Avon and Somerset
Bedfordshire
Cambridgeshire
Cheshire
Cleveland
Cumbria
Dumfries and Galloway
GMP
Guernsey
Gwent
Hampshire
Humberside
Isle of Man
Lancashire
Lincolnshire
Merseyside
MPS
MOD
Norfolk
North Wales
North Yorkshire
Northamptonshire
Northumbria
South Wales
Staffordshire
Suffolk
Thames Valley
Warwickshire
West Mercia
West Midlands
Wiltshire

Reconviction

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what changes were made to the methodology used to calculate adult reconviction rates for the Spending Review 2002 Public Spending Agreement 5 target, compared to the methodology used for the Spending Review 2000 Public Spending Agreement 10 target. [203403]

Paul Goggins: The Spending Review 2000 Public Service Agreement (PSA) target 10 is to reduce reconviction rates for all offenders sentenced to imprisonment or to community supervision and for young offenders by 5 per cent. by 2003–04 compared to 1997 baselines. Both adults and young offenders are included in the measurement of progress against the all offenders element of the target, while the measure for the young offenders element covers those given pre-court disposals (cautions, reprimands and final warnings) and those sentenced to a non-custodial penalty. Young offenders starting community penalties supervised by the Probation Service were therefore included in the measurement of both elements of the target.

The Spending Review 2002 PSA target 5 is to reduce reoffending by 5 per cent. for young offenders and for adults sentenced to imprisonment and to community sentences by 2005–06 compared to 2000 baselines. This represents two changes compared to the methodology adopted for SR 2000: firstly, young offenders starting community penalties or discharged from prison are not included in the measurement of the adult target, and secondly all young offenders, including those discharged from custody are included in the measurement of the young offender target.

These changes were introduced in order to more clearly report the separate progress with young and adult offenders.

Intermittent Custody

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people have reoffended following a sentence of intermittent custody. [199973]

Paul Goggins: The intermittent custody pilots have been running at two prisons since 26 January 2004. Up to 28 November, 138 intermittent custody orders had been made; only one offender has received a further sentence for an offence committed after their intermittent custody order was imposed. It is too soon to predict or to calculate reliable reconviction rates.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners have absconded while serving a period of intermittent custody. [199974]

Paul Goggins: No prisoners have absconded while serving a period of intermittent custody. Three prisoners have failed to turn up for scheduled custody periods. Of these, two have had their sentences varied to full-time custody and one remains unlawfully at large.

Road Traffic Police Officers

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many road traffic police officers there were in 1996; and how many there are now. [203992]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 13 December 2004]*: Available information for 1996 to 2003–04 (latest available) is in the table. The information has been provided by HM Inspectorate of Constabulary, whose definition of traffic officer changed in 1999.

It should be noted that numbers alone do not adequately reflect the attention given to road policing. The adoption of an intelligence-led approach, the integration of this work with other core activities, the increased use of cameras and other technology, and the more effective use of police resources can lead to a reduction in dedicated traffic officers without a reduction in traffic-related targets or enforcement levels.

Traffic officers 1996–97—2003–04

	Operational traffic officers	Operational support traffic officers	Organisational support traffic officers	Total traffic officers
1996–97	N/A	N/A	N/A	9201
1997–98	N/A	N/A	N/A	8986
1998–99	N/A	N/A	N/A	8789
1999–2000	7929	542	19	8490
2000–01	7589	569	39	8196
2001–02	7330	557	34	7922
2002–03	6221	841	376	7438
2003–04	6276	941	419	7636

Notes:

1. Traffic—operational—staff who are predominantly employed on motor-cycles or in patrol vehicles for the policing of traffic and motorway related duties. This does not include officers employed in accident investigation, vehicle examination and radar duties.
2. Traffic—operational support—staff who are predominantly employed to support the traffic function of the force including radar, accident investigation, vehicle examination and traffic administration. Include officers working with hazardous chemicals.
3. Traffic—organisational support—administrative staff predominantly serving the internal needs of the traffic function of the force.

Sentencing

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will bring forward plans to ensure the courts, when imposing a non-custodial sentence for non-violent offences, record specific reasons for that sentence and make them public; [204479]

(2) if he will bring forward plans to ensure that when the courts impose a short custodial sentence they state publicly why a community sentence was not identified as feasible in that case. [204480]

Paul Goggins: Section 174 of the Criminal Justice Act 2003 places a duty on the court when passing sentence to state in open court, in ordinary language and in general terms, its reasons for deciding on the sentence passed. Where the Sentencing Guidelines Council has issued definitive guidelines relevant to the sentence and the court departs from them it must give reasons for doing so. In the case of a custodial sentence or a community sentence, the court must explain why it regards the offence as being sufficiently serious to warrant such a sentence.

We aim to commence the relevant provisions in April 2005.

Mr. Gerrard: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will take steps to prevent courts from imposing a custodial sentence following the breach of a community punishment order where the original offence did not merit imprisonment. [206147]

Paul Goggins: Within the broad statutory limits set by Parliament, sentences in individual cases are a matter for the courts alone, taking into account all the circumstances of the offence and the offender. Prison sentences should be reserved for those who are serious, dangerous or seriously persistent offenders. Equally, offenders cannot be allowed to flout the order of the court and to default on their obligations to abide by the terms of a community sentence.

The Powers of the Criminal Courts (Sentencing) Act 2000, Schedule 3, contains the provisions relating to breach of community orders. Where an offender aged 18 or over and subject to a community order has failed without reasonable excuse to comply with any of the requirements of the relevant order, the magistrates court dealing with the offender must impose a sentence of imprisonment, unless either the court is of the opinion that the offender is likely to comply with the requirements of the order during the period for which it remains in force or that there are exceptional circumstances which would justify the court's not imposing such a sentence.

If the court does not impose a sentence of imprisonment, or if the obligation to do so does not apply, it may alternatively deal with the offender by making a curfew order, a community punishment order, or an attendance centre order, or (where it has the power to do so) by revoking the order and dealing with the offender as though he had just been convicted of the offence.

Sex Offenders

Mr. Edwards: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what guidance he has issued on the advice which should be given to local schools if a sex offender deemed by police to be a danger to children absconds from an open prison. [205492]

Paul Goggins: No central guidance has been issued. Sex offenders in open conditions will have completed sex offender treatment and have been assessed as suitable to be held in open conditions. If it was judged that local schools needed to be informed about an abscond the local education authority (LEA) would be informed through the Multi Agency Protection Panel process (MAPP It would then be for the LEA to notify local schools directly.

Mr. Edwards: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the weekly reports he has requested on the management of sex offenders at HMP Prescoed. [205493]

Paul Goggins: Each week I receive from the Governor of Prescoed prison a report on the number of sex offenders held there. This report includes details of the sentence each prisoner is serving, the offence and the time served, the progress the prisoner is making and the type of work the prisoner is doing. The report also includes the same details for any prisoners expected to transfer to Prescoed from Usk in the following week.

These weekly reports enable me to monitor the arrangements for sex offenders placed at Prescoed and to ensure that those transferring to Prescoed meet the criteria which the Prison Service set, and which I endorsed, namely that life sentenced prisoners should have received a Parole Board recommendation for open conditions, and that determinate sentenced prisoners should be within one year of release.

Sexual Offences Act

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many individuals have been *(a)* arrested and *(b)* convicted under section 15 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003. [201390]

Paul Goggins: The information requested is not available.

Information on arrests collected centrally is based on persons arrested for "notifiable" offences by main offence group and so does not identify individual offences.

Information on convictions for offences under section 15 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 only became identifiable in the statistics collected centrally in January 2004. Statistics for 2004 will be published in the autumn of 2005.

Smartcards Scheme

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much money has been allocated to the Smartcards scheme for young persons' cultural activities; and from which budget it will come. [206383]

Margaret Hodge: I have been asked to reply.

Details of the new Youth Offer will be set out in the Youth Green Paper, which we expect to publish in the new year.

Spot Fines

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many on the spot fines had been issued for each police area by the latest date for which figures are available. [205066]

Paul Goggins: The latest provisional data shows that 40,765 penalty notices for disorder have been issued by police forces in England and Wales up to 31 October 2004. Details are shown in the table.

Number of penalty notices for disorder given for all offences from 1 October 2003 to 31 October 2004 by police force area, England and Wales (Provisional)

Police force area	*Number of PNDs given for all offences*
Avon and Somerset	243
Bedfordshire	311
Cambridgeshire	197
Cheshire	505
City of London	33
Cleveland	325
Cumbria	329
Derbyshire	383
Devon and Cornwall	1,218
Dorset	278
Durham	205
Essex	1,887
Gloucestershire	597
Greater Manchester	1,214
Hampshire	1,222
Hertfordshire	210
Humberside	894
Kent	416
Lancashire	3,486
Leicestershire	438
Lincolnshire	209
Merseyside	2,639
Metropolitan Police	8,423
Norfolk	387
North Yorkshire	493
Northamptonshire	334
Northumbria[1]	—
Nottinghamshire	678
South Yorkshire	1,046
Staffordshire	1,088
Suffolk	298
Surrey	131
Sussex	941
Thames Valley	352
Warwickshire	275
West Mercia	121
West Midlands	4,836
West Yorkshire	2,453
Wiltshire	252
Dyfed-Powys	199
Gwent	228
North Wales	881
South Wales	110
Total England and Wales	40,765

Number of penalty notices for disorder given for all offences from 1 October 2003 to 31 October 2004 by police force area, England and Wales (Provisional)

[1] Commenced issuing penalty notices from 1 November 2004.

Staff Training Courses

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the *(a)* cost to the Department, *(b)* title and *(c)* location was of each training course organised by his Department for its staff in each financial year since 1997–98. [200393]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Home Office accounts system does not capture centrally the cost of all training which is provided to its staff, especially where that training is provided either by contract staff or its own staff.

In addition there is no central register of courses attended or their locations.

This information cannot be provided except as a disproportionate cost.

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what financial penalties were paid in each financial year since 1997–98 to training providers by the Department for training courses prepared for its staff which were subsequently cancelled at the Department's request. [200413]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Home Office accounting system does not separately capture in its accounting system, expenditure on courses which have been cancelled.

This information cannot be provided except as a disproportionate cost.

Telephone Numbers

Mr. Tyler: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many non-geographic 0870 telephone numbers are in use by his Department; and what services can be accessed by calling each of them. [205830]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The Home Office uses the following 0870 numbers:

	0870 numbers
Immigration and Nationality Directorate	
Main	0870 606 7766
Application Forms	0870 241 0645
Beckett House recorded information message	0870 240 3781
Complaints	0870 241 6523
UK Passport Service	
Main	0870 521 0410
Textphone	0870 240 8090
High street partners	0870 243 4477

	0870 numbers
Complaints	0870 241 1902
Criminal Records Bureau	
Main	0870 909 0811
Registration	0870 909 0822
Disclosure applications	0870 909 0844
Minicom	0870 909 0344
HM Prison Service	0870 000 1397
HMP Holloway	0870 000 0575
Home Office	
Home Office Public Enquiries	0870 000 1585
Home Office Publications (operated by Prologue on behalf of the Home Office)	0870 241 4680
TOGETHER (advice to practitioners on tackling antisocial behaviour)	0870 220 2000
Crime Reduction (advice on preventing car crime)	0870 000 8518
Security Industry Authority	0870 243 0100

Traffic Offences (Sentencing Policy)

Mr. Byrne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to publish detailed proposals to update sentencing policy for serious road traffic offences. [200255]

Paul Goggins: The Criminal Justice Act 2003 increased maximum sentences for causing death by dangerous and careless driving from 10 to 14 years.

The Government believe that the law on road traffic offences involving bad driving needs urgent reform. The announced review of road traffic offences has largely been completed but there are a number of further issues which require careful scrutiny before a consultation paper can be published. We intend to publish the consultation paper shortly.

Transsexual Prisoners

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when his Department will publish guidelines on the treatment of transsexual prisoners. [201854]

Paul Goggins: The Prison Service hopes to publish these guidelines by next spring.

Vehicle Disposal

Alistair Burt: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received in relation to the review of the statutory charges document for vehicle removal, storage and disposal. [206643]

Caroline Flint: Charges in respect of the removal of vehicles and their subsequent storage and disposal are set by Statutory Instrument in the form of Regulations made under the Refuse Disposal (Amenity) Act 1978 and the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. Many of the operators who undertake such removals are keen to see various alterations to these Regulations. From time to time, they, their representative organisations, or others on their behalf enquire when the level of charges might be changed or whether it is proposed to review and amend the basis and structure of the charges and how they are applied.

Alistair Burt: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he intends to review the statutory charges document for vehicle removal, storage and disposal; and if he will make a statement. [206644]

Caroline Flint: The charges for vehicle removal, storage and disposal are set by statutory instrument following consultation with the interested parties. We do not propose to change that.

The appropriate level for the charges, the basis on which they are set, their structure, how they are applied in different circumstances and arrangements for their periodic reassessment are matters we have been considering. We will be continuing this work in 2005.

Voluntary Sector Contracts

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will place in the Library a copy of the cross-cutting inter-departmental review on contracts with the voluntary sector. [206411]

John Healey: I have been asked to reply.

Copies of the 2002 Cross Cutting Review of the Role of the Voluntary and Community Sector in Service Delivery were deposited in the Library on 1 September 2002. Full findings of the Government's recent Voluntary and Community Sector Review will be published shortly through three publications, copies of which will be placed in the Library.

Women Offenders

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to produce regular reports on the progress of the Home Office's Women Offenders Reduction Programme initiative. [206013]

Paul Goggins: The Women's Offending Reduction Programme was published on 11 March 2004 and contains action points agreed by a range of stakeholders, both within and outside the criminal justice system. Progress with these action points is monitored and co-ordinated by the Women's Policy Team who provide me with six monthly reports. Formal reviews of progress will take place at the end of each year of the programme when a report will be produced and made publicly available.

Young Offenders

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the progress made towards the Government's 2001 manifesto pledge to improve the standard of custodial accommodation and offending behaviour programmes for 18 to 20-year-old offenders. [201393]

Paul Goggins: The Government have invested heavily in improved regimes for all prisoners, concentrating on activities such as education and vocational training which are particularly valuable for young adults. Funding for offender education and training has risen from £97 million last year to £122 million this year.

Five larger Young Offender Institutions and five local prisons have received an additional £20 million investment over the last four years, improving standards of decency and providing enhanced regimes for over one third of young adult offenders held in custody at any one time. Other improvements include the refurbishment of accommodation and facilities at Rochester, Castington and Swinfen Hall.

Two other Young Offender Institutions, Thorn Cross and Deerbolt, have received extra investment to run the High Intensity Training programme which addresses offending behaviour and provides education, vocational training and mentoring to reduce the risk of re-offending.

The National Offender Management Service will improve the way offenders are managed, including young adults. In addition, a project board has been established to develop a strategy for managing young adult offenders, including any special regime requirements for this group.

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what guidelines are in place to ensure the detention of young offenders within 50 miles of their homes. [204398]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 13 December 2004]:* There are no guidelines in relation to the distance that young adult offenders (aged 18–20 years) are held from their home address.

In its management of the prison population, the National Offender Management Service aims to hold all prisoners (including young adult offenders) in establishments that provide the degree of security they require, are suitable to their gender, age and legal status, provide special facilities appropriate to prisoner needs and are near to their homes or the courts dealing with their cases.

The Youth Justice Board's guidance for young offenders (aged under 18) is that the most local placement will be sought which is also consistent with the other needs of the young person.

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assistance is provided to family members of young offenders detained more than 50 miles from their homes to enable them to make regular visits. [204399]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 13 December 2004]:* Assistance is provided through the Assisted Prison Visits Scheme, which is funded and operated by Her Majesty's Prison Service. The purpose of the scheme is to provide help with travel costs and accommodation, where necessary, to prisoners' close relatives and partners, who are on a low income as specified in the rules of the scheme. Help may also be available to someone who is the prisoner's only visitor.

Zimbabwe

Mr. Malins: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department on what basis the decision to end the suspension of removals for failed asylum seekers from Zimbabwe was taken; and whether this represents a change in the Government's assessment of the human rights situation in that country. [204030]

Mr. Browne: I refer the hon. Member to the written ministerial statement on 16 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 78WS, announcing the end of the temporary suspension of enforced removals of failed asylum seekers to Zimbabwe. That statement explains the reason for the change in policy and stresses the fact that it does not reflect any change in the Government's condemnation of human rights abuses in Zimbabwe.

Written Answers to Questions

Tuesday 11 January 2005

DEFENCE

Army Discipline

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what time restrictions apply with respect to making an application to the Employment Tribunal following consideration of a complaint under Army redress procedures relating to *(a)* sexual harassment, *(b)* racial harassment, *(c)* parental leave directive, *(d)* pay and *(e)* religion. [201838]

Mr. Ingram: The standard time limit for an application to an Employment Tribunal is six months from the most recent occurrence about which the claim is being made. There is no requirement for an Army complainant to wait for an outcome of the internal complaints procedure before taking their case to Employment Tribunal. However in such a case the Army procedures are usually put on hold pending the completion of the Employment Tribunal.

Atomic Weapons Establishment

Mr. Keith Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the balance sheet value of the Atomic Weapons Establishment in the books of his Department was as at 31 March; what the carrying charge and applicable depreciation for that establishment is in the current year; and for what reasons his Department is investing a further £467 million in that establishment. [206603]

Mr. Ingram: As at 31 March 2004, the Gross Book Value of the Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) Balance Sheet was £552.8 million and the associated carrying depreciation was £55.3 million resulting in a Net Book Value of £497.5 million. The projected depreciation to 31 March 2005, for AWE, is £28.0 million. Investment at AWE is directed towards the maintenance of the effectiveness of the nuclear deterrent and enables AWE to meet safety, environmental and operational requirements. It is also in accordance with the Government's policy of keeping options for maintaining a nuclear deterrent capability, in line with the policy set out at paragraph 3.11 of the 2003 Defence White Paper (Cm 6041-1).

European Combined Forces

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what his policy is on the deployment of British troops as part of combined European forces under EU leadership; and if he will make a statement. [207710]

Mr. Hoon: As stated in the 2003 Defence White Paper, the Government expects United Kingdom forces to conduct operations alongside and integrated with a range of multinational groupings—US, NATO, European, UN or other forces—under various command arrangements. The most appropriate command arrangement will depend on the prevailing circumstances. Decisions on whether to deploy British forces as part of an EU operation are taken by the Government on a case-by-case basis, as with NATO and all other multinational operations.

Firebombs/Napalm

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether Mark 77 firebombs have been used by Coalition forces *(a)* in Iraq and *(b)* in or near areas in Iraq where civilians lived; whether this weapon is equivalent to napalm; whether (i) the UK and (ii) the US has signed the UN convention banning the use of napalm against civilian targets; and if he will make a statement. [207246]

Mr. Ingram: The United States have confirmed to us that they have not used Mark 77 firebombs, which are essentially napalm canisters, in Iraq at any time. No other Coalition member has Mark 77 firebombs in their inventory.

The United Kingdom is bound under Protocol III to the 1980 Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) not to use incendiary weapons (which would include napalm) against military targets located within concentrations of civilians.

US policy in relation to international conventions is a matter for the US Government, but all of our allies are aware of their obligations under international humanitarian law.

Gibraltar (Trafalgar Commemorations)

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on activities planned by his Department involving Gibraltar as part of the Trafalgar commemorations. [207078]

Mr. Ingram: A programme of events is planned to take place in Gibraltar during the weekend of 28–30 October 2005 to commemorate the close historic links between Gibraltar and Nelson's victory. In addition to a traditional service of remembrance at the Trafalgar cemetery, these will include a Nelson exhibition, Beating the Retreat and reception, and a Royal Navy Ceremonial Guard Mount at His Excellency the Governor's residence. The Royal Navy will also be invited to exercise their Freedom of the City privileges. In the United Kingdom, the Royal Navy is organising a special programme of events for this year, which is being coordinated with other events as part of the SeaBritain and Trafalgar Festival initiatives to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar.

Infantry Battalions/Regiments

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence on what date he decided to change his decision on not disbanding or amalgamating infantry battalions. [202197]

Mr. Hoon: I refer the hon. Member to my statements to the House on 21 July 2004, *Official Report*, column 343, and, more recently on 16 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1195, about the future of the Infantry. The decision to restructure the infantry was taken in response to the evolving strategic environment. In our judgment, it is needed to ensure that the Army is best suited to meet present challenges and those of the future.

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to his oral statement of 16 December 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1195–1218, on the future structure of the infantry, how he plans to retain the separate identities of the King's Own Scottish Borderers and the Royal Scots within the proposed Royal Regiment of Scotland. [206538]

Mr. Hoon: As I announced on the 16 December, the First Battalions of the Royal Scots and the King's Own Scottish Borderers will merge to form a new battalion within the future Royal Regiment of Scotland. This new regiment will have a common capbadge, uniform and a common tartan. There will, however, be scope for battalions to retain a degree of individual identity within these large regiments. For example, antecedent names will be maintained at battalion level prior to the new regimental name. How this can be achieved in other ways will be for the new regiment to decide in due course.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to his statement of 16 December 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1195–1218, on the structure of the infantry, what definition he uses of regimental identity. [206539]

Mr. Hoon: There is no single definition of regimental identity that can be applied across all the regiments of infantry.

As I made clear in my announcement on 16 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1795W, there will be scope for all infantry battalions to retain a degree of individual identity within the new large regiments. For example, antecedent names will be maintained in some form in new titles. How identities can be preserved in other ways will be for all the new regiments to decide in due course.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether cap badges will continue to have a role to play in defining regimental identity. [206540]

Mr. Hoon: The new regiments will have individual cap badges.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether recruitment to the new Yorkshire regiment will be conducted on an exclusively county-wide basis. [206541]

Mr. Hoon: The new Yorkshire Regiment will adopt the recruiting areas of its antecedents, those being The Prince of Wales's Own Regiment of Yorkshire, The Green Howards and The Duke of Wellington's Regiment.

As before, residents of other areas of the United Kingdom will also be able to volunteer for service in The Yorkshire Regiment.

Iraq

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what reports he has received concerning the use of napalm gas in Falluja. [203538]

Mr. Ingram: None.

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what reports he has received concerning the use by coalition forces of toxic chemical agents on *(a)* military and *(b)* civilian targets in Iraq. [206030]

Mr. Hoon: None.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what contribution his Department has made to counts of civilian casualties and fatalities in Iraq; and which organisations including the Iraqi Government it has assisted. [206820]

Mr. Ingram: The Iraqi Government produces its own estimate of Iraqi casualties, based on Ministry of Health statistics for hospital admissions. The Ministry of Defence has not assisted Iraqi Government efforts to collate casualty numbers.

The MOD has not assisted other organisations with independent counts of civilian casualties and fatalities. We have no methodology which would enable us to produce accurate estimates.

Glenda Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assistance is being provided by British troops to locate and make safe any unexploded armaments in and around Falluja resulting from recent Multi-National Force actions. [202137]

Mr. Hoon: None; there are no UK units in Falluja.

Legal Expenditure

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much the Department spent on lawyers in each year since 1997; how many *(a)* actions, *(b)* settlements and *(c)* court cases there were in each year; and what the costs of each settlement were. [206456]

Mr. Ingram: The information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Ministerial Visits

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence on what occasions he has flown to and from Basra; what type of aircraft was used on each occasion; how his entourage was comprised on each occasion; how many vacant spaces were available on each flight home; and if he will make a statement. [207134]

Mr. Ingram: My right hon. Friend the Defence Secretary (Mr. Hoon) has flown to Basra on four occasions: April 2003, October 2003, June 2004 and December 2004. On each occasion, for security reasons, he has used military aircraft to fly in to and out of Basra. He was accompanied by a member of his outer office and appropriate MOD military and civilian officials.

Each military flight out of Basra was subject to a formal operational tasking and any vacant seats were made available to other MOD or military personnel.

Naval Munitions

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Principal Warfare Officers have not fired naval munitions since 1 January. [206928]

Mr. Ingram: All Principal Warfare Officers (PWO) in training and serving in PWO billets at sea will have conducted live firings since 1 January 2004 as part of their requirement to remain at Operational Performance Standard.

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the Royal Navy has met its target for the firing of shells and missiles in 2004. [206929]

Mr. Ingram: The Royal Navy met its mandated targets for firing shells and missiles in 2004, except when operational priorities/tasking dictated a change in programme.

Parachute Regiment

Mr. Russell Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the *(a)* establishment and *(b)* current strength is of each of the three battalions of the Parachute Regiment. [200998]

Mr. Ingram: As at 1 November 2004, the establishment and strength of each of the three battalions of the Parachute Regiment was as follows:

Battalion	*Establishment*	*Strength*
1st Battalion the Parachute Regiment	580	570
2nd Battalion the Parachute Regiment	580	540
3rd Battalion the Parachute Regiment	580	540

The establishment figures include only the infantry posts (officers and soldiers) and exclude attached personnel of other Arms and Services such as chefs, clerks, etc. The figures are rounded to the nearest five.

The strength numbers were collected on 1 November and have been rounded to the nearest five. They do not include officers and soldiers in the Parachute Regiment that are serving outside the battalion, or personnel from other cap-badges who are attached to the battalion. We cannot be precise about the strength in each battalion as the means by which this data is collected does not allow for separate attribution. The split is therefore derived from an estimate based on strength by Unit Identity Number.

Radiation Exposure

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what information his Department places in the public domain on the extent to which those working at defence establishments that use nuclear materials are exposed to radiation; what independent assessment is made of the dosimetry statistics; and what research is being conducted to reduce radiation exposure. [206273]

Mr. Ingram: Since 1990 the Ministry of Defence has placed in the Library of the House copies of the annual dosimetry statistics for workers who receive exposures from radiation sources and radioactive materials used by the Ministry of Defence and its contractors. These annual dosimetry statistics include all personnel monitored by the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory Radiological Protection Services (DRPS) Approved Dosimetry Service.

AWE employs its own dosimetry laboratory which is subject to regulation and scrutiny by the HSE. AWE dosimetry statistics are published in AWE plc annual reports, a copy of which is also available in the Library of the House, and on the AWE plc website. The doses reported in the DRPS statistics are very low when compared with the regulatory dose limits. The annual dose limit for workers aged 18 and over is 20 mSv. The average dose in 2003 for all personnel monitored by the DRPS Approved Dosimetry Service was 0.35 mSv and the maximum dose to any individual in 2003 was below 5 mSv. The DRPS report includes dosimetry information based on all DRPS customers and this includes an element of commercial work for organisations such as NHS trusts and HM Customs and Excise.

The Ministry of Defence provides radiation dosimetry information to the National Radiological Protection Board for inclusion in the National Registry of Radiation Workers (NRRW). The NRRW is used to support independent epidemiological analysis of workers exposed to radiation during the course of their work.

The Ministry of Defence is bound by Regulation 8 of the Ionising Radiation Regulations 1999 that places a duty on employers, in relation to any work with ionising radiation that they undertake, to take all necessary steps to restrict, so far as is reasonably practicable, the extent to which their employees and other persons are exposed to ionising radiation. Compliance with this duty is enforced by the Health and Safety Executive and HM Nuclear Installations Inspectorate together with the Ministry of Defence's internal Regulators.

The Ministry of Defence and its contractors carefully consider the need to reduce worker doses when designing, operating, maintaining and decommissioning plant and equipment that involves exposure to radiation.

Spectrum

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the spectrum price paid by his Department for the bands which it managed was in financial years *(a)* 1999–2000, *(b)* 2000–01, *(c)* 2001–02, *(d)* 2002–03 and *(e)* 2003–04; what his estimate is for 2004–05; and what estimate he has made for financial years (i) 2005–06, (ii) 2006–07 and (iii) 2007–08. [203929]

Mr. Ingram: The price paid by financial year was as follows:

Financial year	*Price paid (£ million)*
1999–2000	[1]6
2000–01	[1]12
2001–02	22.625
2002–03	23.740
2003–04	24.292
For the current year:	
2004–05	24.292

Financial year	*Price paid (£ million)*
Estimates for:	
2005–06	55.784
2006–07	55.784

[1] Approx.

Thereafter the pricing is expected to be reviewed by HM Treasury.

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list mobile and fixed linked bands that *(a)* were and *(b)* were not subject to spectrum pricing in financial years (i) 1999–2000, (ii) 2000–01, (iii) 2001–02, (iv) 2002–03 and (v) 2003–04. [203930]

Mr. Ingram: The application of pricing to Ministry of Defence managed bands by the Radiocommunications Agency up to December 2004 and thereafter by Ofcom is given in the following table:

Band (MHz)	*Pricing*	*Remarks*
70–70.5	Yes	—
72.8–74.8	Yes	—
75.2–76.7	Yes	—
78–80	Yes	—
84–85	Yes	—
137–138	Yes	—
141.9–143	Yes	—
149–149.9	Yes	—
153.5–154	Yes	—
225–400	No	—
401–406	Yes	—
406.1–450	Yes	—
845–862	Yes	—
870–888	Yes	—
915–933	Yes	—
1375–1400	Yes	—
1427–1452	Yes	—
2025–2070	Yes	New to MOD in 2003–04
2200–2245	Yes	New to MOD in 2003–04
2290–2300	Yes	—
2310–2390	Yes	—
3400–3600	Yes	—
4400–5000	Yes	—
14620–15230	Yes	—

Except as indicated in the remarks there has been no change in the application of pricing in the financial years 1999–2000 to 2003–04.

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much his Department paid for use of spectrum for ground-based radar in financial years *(a)* 1999–2000, *(b)* 2000–01, *(c)* 2001–02, *(d)* 2002–03 and *(e)* 2003–04. [203931]

Mr. Ingram: The fees paid by the Ministry of Defence for radar frequency bands are as follows:

Financial year	*Fees (£ million)*
1999–2000	1.554
2000–01	3.109
2001–02	6.218
2002–03	6.218
2003–04	6.218

It should be noted that these Radiolocation bands are not exclusively allocated to ground use.

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list mobile and fixed linked bands that have been released for civil use in financial years *(a)* 1997–98, *(b)* 1998–99, *(c)* 1999–2000, *(d)* 2000–01, *(e)* 2001–02, *(f)* 2002–03 and *(g)* 2003–04; and what plans he has to release spectrum for civil use in (i) 2005–06, (ii) 2006–07 and (iii) 2007–08. [203932]

Mr. Ingram: Records with the necessary detail to ascribe the release of spectrum to particular financial years are not held centrally by Ministry of Defence or Ofcom. However, significant cases of release of spectrum by MOD in the period from 1997 for civilian use are listed. Both spectrum that has been released for civilian use and spectrum that has been shared between military and civilian users has been included in the following list.

10.125—10.225 GHz and 10.4 0 10.5 GHz shared

8 MHz of the 410—415/420—425 MHz bands shared

856—860 MHz released

3480—3500/3580 and 3600 MHz leased back to the Radiocommunications Agency for 15 years

8400—8500 MHz released

2290—2300 MHz released

39.5—40 GHz released

This list indicates the results of close co-operation between the MOD and the Radiocommunications Agency/Ofcom and does not include all cases of sharing arrangements.

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will place in the Library copies of the information that his Department has released to commercial operators about its prospective spectrum utilisation. [203933]

Mr. Ingram: The MOD has released no information to commercial operators in respect of its prospective spectrum utilisation. Such information is only discussed with companies bidding to supply MOD with equipment on a Commercial in Confidence basis and with Ofcom to shape future policy.

Staffords

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the means by which the Staffords will retain their separate regimental identity once they have been integrated into the new Mercian Regiment. [206900]

Mr. Hoon: As I announced on 16 December 2004, the Cheshires, the Worcestershire and Sherwood Foresters and the Staffords will amalgamate to form the Mercian Regiment which will have three regular battalions. There will be scope for battalions to retain a degree of individual identity within the new large regiments. For example, antecedent names will be maintained at battalion level in brackets after the new regimental name. How this can be achieved in other ways will be for the new regiment to decide in due course.

Swan Hunter

Mr. Viggers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what financial support has the Department given to Swan Hunter shipyard in each of the last 30 years. [206391]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence does not provide financial support to the defence industry.

The lead Department for policy relating to Government financial support to industry is the Department of Trade and Industry.

Training

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the annual training requirement is for Principal Warfare Officers; and whether it has been fulfilled this year. [206930]

Mr. Ingram: In Financial Year 2003–04, 40 Principal Warfare Officers (PWO) were required and 40 trained. It is anticipated that 39 will be trained in FY 2004–05 and in 2005–06. This is expected to meet the Navy's presently forecast requirements.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

Select Committees (Legislation)

39. **Tony Wright:** To ask the Leader of the House if he will make proposals to the Select Committee on the Modernisation of the House to enable Select Committees to introduce legislation. [207402]

Mr. Woolas: My right hon. Friend has no plans to do so. It is, of course, already open to any Member to introduce legislation. The question is whether bills initiated by Select Committees should have priority over other non-Government Bills.

Sitting Hours

43. **Mr. Mackay:** To ask the Leader of the House if he will make a statement on changes to sitting hours of the House. [207406]

Mr. Woolas: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer given by my right hon. Friend, the Leader of the House, to the Member for Sheffield, Heeley (Ms Munn) earlier today.

TRANSPORT

Bicycle Lights

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make it the policy of the Government that bicycle lights which flash, pulsate or comprise light emitting diodes shall be deemed to satisfy the requirement that bicycles ridden at night should have lights. [207636]

Mr. Jamieson *[holding answer 10 January 2005]:* Bicycle lights which comprise light emitting diodes and that conform to British Standard BS6102:3 are already deemed to satisfy the requirement for bicycles ridden at night to have lights. My Department is currently considering a change in legislation to allow the use of flashing lights on pedal cycles.

Cats Eyes

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the Government's policy is towards the use of cats eyes on unlit roads; what the reasons are for the policy; and if he will make a statement. [207215]

Mr. Jamieson: The Department for Transport's advice on the use of cats eyes is set out in section 6 of Chapter 5 of the Traffic Signs Manual. A new edition was published last year. Because they remain effective in wet weather and particularly in areas prone to fog, when reflectorised road markings perform less well, they are recommended on all high-speed roads. Their use is compulsory with double white line systems, when the normal spacing is closed up to 4.5 metres, because it is essential for safety reasons that drivers recognise the lines in all weather conditions.

Dial-a-Ride Buses

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what steps he has taken to promote dial-a-ride bus services; and what assessment he has made of the take-up of these services; [207729]

(2) if he will list those areas in which dial-a-ride bus services are in operation; and if he will make a statement. [207730]

Charlotte Atkins: In February 2004 regulations were introduced to make it easier to run registered local bus services in England and Wales for the general public whose routes and timings vary subject to passenger demand. The Department undertook a series of seminars across the regions to highlight the new flexibilities and encourage take up of this new type of service.

Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG) was also extended to cover flexibly-routed local bus services in England and Wales. Bus registration and BSOG in Scotland are devolved to the Scottish Parliament.

96 services have been registered with the Traffic Commissioners to date.

Traffic area office	*Total applications received*	*New*	*Variation of existing registration*	*Accepted*	*Refused*	*Withdrawn*	*Awaiting information from operator*
North East	25	22	3	22	1	0	2
North West	32	20	12	12	14	6	0
West Midlands	15	15	0	15	0	0	0
Eastern	11	10	1	9	0	1	1
Welsh	6	6	0	6	0	0	0
Western	43	36	7	32	3	1	7
Total	132	109	23	96	18	8	10

This is in addition to the specialised dial-a-ride services provided by the voluntary transport sector which have long operated in many areas.

Eurostar (North Kent)

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects domestic passengers from North Kent rail stations to be able to use Eurostar to and from London. [207031]

Mr. McNulty: The future of services in North Kent announced will be announced shortly, when the Invitation to Tender for the new Integrated Kent Franchise is issued to bidders.

Hybrid Engine Cars

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what action he is taking to develop hybrid engine cars. [206921]

Mr. Jamieson *[holding answer 10 January 2005]:* The Government provides a number of incentives to encourage the purchase and use of clean, low carbon vehicles, including hybrid vehicles. The Vehicle Excise Duty regime, for example, rewards the purchase of the most fuel-efficient vehicles, with additional discounts for hybrid vehicles. The company car tax system introduced in April 2002 provides very large incentives to encourage the purchase of clean, fuel-efficient cars, with hybrid vehicles enjoying a significant additional discount.

The Government also funds two grant programmes, run by the Energy Saving Trust, which are designed to encourage the development and market uptake of more environmentally friendly (lower CO_2 and/or air pollutant-emitting) vehicles and vehicle technologies, including hybrids. The New Vehicle Technology Fund provides grants for projects to develop demonstration vehicles for new technologies which reduce the CO_2 emissions and/or air pollutant emissions such as NOx and particulates. During 2004–05 18 projects have been funded, of which 11 involve hybrid technology. The grant allocation for the New Vehicle Technology Fund in 2004–05 is £4.6 million.

The Powershift grant programme is also funded by Government, to provide grants to individuals and undertakings to purchase vehicles which are proven to have reduced CO_2 and/or air pollutant emissions, in order to encourage their uptake. So far during 2004–05, grants have been awarded towards the purchase of 1,053 hybrid cars, which represents 42 per cent. of the total number of vehicles funded.

As we announced on 21 December 2004, following our recent consultation exercise, we intend to revise the grant programmes so as to incentivise the cleanest cars regardless of the technology or fuel type, while ensuring that grant levels are also consistent with European rules on state aid. A full copy of the press release can be accessed on the Department for Transport's website, at: http://www.dft.gov.uk/pns/displaypn.cgi?pn_id=2004_0164

Railway Directives

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the effect of European Court of Justice case C-483/02, as detailed in OJ C300 volume 47 of 4 December, on UK implementation of railway directives; what measures he will take to comply with the ruling; and what estimate he has made of the costs which will be incurred in so complying. [207168]

Mr. McNulty: We currently expect to transpose the Directives concerned (2001/12/EC, 2001/13/EC and 2001/14/EC) by the end of 2005. In reality, these Directives will have little effect on the railways which already comply with the vast majority of the Directives' requirements which aim to open up the European rail market to competition. The estimated costs and benefits of complying with these requirements will be set out in a Regulatory Impact Assessment produced to accompany consultation later this year on the draft regulations to transpose these Directives into domestic law.

Road Casualties

Jane Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many pedestrians have been *(a)* injured, *(b)* seriously injured and *(c)* killed in collisions with (i) car drivers, (ii) drivers of all motor vehicles and (iii) cyclists in each of the last five years. [207719]

Mr. Jamieson: The information requested is shown in the following table. Figures are taken from the annual publication "Road Casualties Great Britain" copies of which can be found in the House of Commons Library.

Pedestrian casualties by vehicle hit in accident: GB 1999–2003

				Number of casualties		
Vehicle type:	*Severity*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
Pedal cycle	Killed	5	3	0	4	4
	Serious	70	66	60	47	45
	Slight	276	225	198	158	210
	All	351	294	258	209	259
Car	Killed	608	590	531	534	533
	Serious	7,451	7,161	6,828	6,496	5,886
	Slight	27,603	27,038	26,127	24,944	23,390
	All	35,662	34,789	33,486	32,024	29,809
All motor vehicles[1]	Killed	863	849	822	766	762
	Serious	8,867	8,549	8,161	7,790	7,100
	Slight	32,685	32,200	31,237	29,906	28,206
	All	42,415	41,598	40,220	38,462	36,068

[1] Excludes vehicle type not reported.

Road Noise

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) pursuant to the answer of 14 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1014W, on road noise, when the Highways Agency will announce the outcome of its review of the programme for quieter surfaces; [206694]

(2) which schemes detailed in the announcement have not yet been completed; on what date work began or is due to begin on each; and what the expected dates of completion are; [206695]

(3) on which roads quieter surfaces have now been introduced; and, in respect of each road where the difference between actual noise levels and those predicted is significant, on what date quieter surfaces will be introduced. [206696]

Mr. Jamieson *[holding answer 21 December 2004]:* The Highways Agency is currently reviewing its programmes of work for 2005–06 in line with the Spending Review settlement. Works programmes for 2005–06, including resurfacing, should be known by the time of publication of the Highways Agency's Business Plan for 2005–06 to 2007–08, expected in March 2005.

The following schemes which were included in the indicative forward programme issued on 17 October 2001, *Official Report*, column 1229W, have not yet been completed:

A12 Hatfield Peverel
M42 J9–10
Al Winthorpe to North Muskham
Al Winthorpe to Coddington
Al Coddington to Balderton
A46 Widmerpool to Willoughby
A46 Willoughby to Six Hills
A180 Harbrough to Stallingborough
A180 Great Coates to Pyewipe
M62 Gilberdyke to Newport
A47 East Dereham Bypass
M5 J26–27
M11 J6–7NB
M25 J16–17
Al Carlton to North Muskham
M69 Con 2 J21 to flexible section

Of the schemes listed, the following will be completed in financial year 2004–05:

M5 J26–27
M11 J6–7NB
M25 J16–17
Al Carlton to North Muskham
M69 Con 2 J21 to flexible section

Start of works dates for the remaining schemes have not yet been confirmed. Due to other competing and pressing maintenance needs, it has not been possible to progress the schemes within the indicative timetable originally provided.

Of the 17 concrete roads that have been opened since June 1988, one scheme (A27 Chichester-Havant) will be resurfaced with quieter surfacing in this financial year.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport on how many occasions between 31 March 2002 and 31 March 2003 his special advisers travelled abroad in an official capacity; what places were visited; and how much each visit cost. [207176]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department was formed on 29 May 2002. Between that date and 31 March 2003, a departmental special adviser accompanied the Secretary of State to Strasbourg at a cost of £675.31. All travel by special advisers is undertaken in accordance with the guidelines set out in the Ministerial Code and Civil Service Management Code.

Traffic Statistics

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what the average 24 hour traffic volume has been in each month since January at the *(a)* Norton Canes to A34 Great Wyrley, *(b)* Shenstone to Chasetown and *(c)* Wishaw to A38 automatic traffic counters on the M6 Toll road on (i) Mondays to Fridays, (ii) Saturdays and (iii) Sundays; [206535]

(2) what the average 24 hour traffic volume was in each month since January at the *(a)* J3-J4E, *(b)* J4A-J5, *(c)* J9-J10, *(d)* J10-J10A, *(e)* J10A-J11, *(f)* J12-J13, *(g)* J6-J7 and *(h)* J9-J10 automatic traffic counters on the M6 on (i) Mondays to Fridays, (ii) Saturdays and (iii) Sundays; [206536]

(3) what the average 24 hour traffic volume has been in each month since January at the *(a)* J6-J7 and *(b)* J9-J10 automatic traffic counters on the M42 on (i) Mondays to Fridays, (ii) Saturdays and (iii) Sundays. [206537]

Mr. Jamieson *[holding answer 21 December 2004]:* Tables which contain the information requested have been placed in the Libraries of the House.

Figures for the M6 and M42 have been provided from data collected by the Highways Agency's automatic traffic counters. Although some of this information is not available, most is in the format required.

Figures for the M6 Toll have been taken from information provided on the website of Midlands Expressway Ltd., operators of the toll road. The company is not able to readily break down the figures into the lengths of road specified, nor separate them into northbound and southbound directions as with the M6 and M42.

Transport (Disabled Access)

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) how many and what proportion of trains in operation in each year since 1995 have been wheelchair accessible, broken down by train operator; and if he will make a statement; [207708]

(2) what his estimate is of the number of trains that will have to be scrapped to meet the accessibility end date of 2020, broken down by train operator; and if he will make a statement. [207709]

Mr. McNulty: The powers in Part 5 of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) allow the Government to make regulations requiring all new land based public transport vehicles—trains, buses and coaches, and taxis—to be accessible to disabled people, including those who need to remain in wheelchairs.

The Rail Vehicle Accessibility Regulations (RVAR) came into force on 31 December 1998, and have applied to all new rail vehicles coming into service in England, Scotland and Wales after that date. Northern Ireland has its own separate regulations. The RVAR, which were the first regulations to be made under Part 5 of the DDA, considerably improve access for disabled passengers to new rail vehicles. The Regulations were drawn up in close consultation with the Government's statutory advisers on transport issues as they affect disabled people, the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC).

The regulations cover wheelchair accessibility and accommodation, including the design of on-board accessible toilets for those trains in which toilet facilities are provided. They also specify the size and location of handrails and handholds, and control devices as well as covering the provision of audible warnings and other equipment. In addition, a requirement for both visual and audible passenger information assists passengers with sensory impairments to use rail services with confidence.

Over 3,800 new fully accessible rail vehicles are now in service—which represents almost one third of the national heavy rail fleet. A further 700 vehicles will be entering service over the next 12 months. In addition, many older trains, while not meeting full RVAR standards already had wheelchair accommodation and other features to assist disabled passengers prior to 1998.

The Department does not record which vehicles are in use by which train operator, as they are frequently swapped between operators, according to operational needs.

The Government are proposing to take powers in the Disability Discrimination Bill to enable it to set an end date by which time all rail vehicles must comply with the RVAR. My hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State announced in November that the Government's preferred end-date is 2020. We also intend to require access improvements to those features which are included in refurbishment plans for older rail vehicles.

Using figures from the Strategic Rail Authority, we estimate, that fewer than 2200 non-compliant vehicles would still be in service by 2020. The decision as to whether to refurbish older trains to RVAR standards or replace them with new, RVAR compliant trains by then is a matter for the rolling stock leasing companies and train operators. The Government will be publishing for consultation a Regulatory Impact Assessment to accompany draft regulations, during the passage of the Bill through Parliament.

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport which licensing authorities are not operating taxis that are accessible to disabled people; and if he will make a statement. [207727]

Charlotte Atkins: The following list is based on the latest statistical data on wheelchair accessible taxis, compiled by the Department for Transport and based on returns provided by local licensing authorities in England and Wales, as at 31 March 2004. This showed that the authorities listed did not license accessible vehicles as taxis at that time.

We recognise that the current generation of accessible taxis do not meet the needs of all disabled people although they do provide a good level of access for many wheelchair users. The Department for Transport is therefore currently looking into the ergonomic requirements of taxi design that would enable as many disabled people as possible to use taxis.

The results of that research will form the basis of the technical specifications to support the Government's proposals to introduce Taxi Accessibility Regulations under part 5 of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA). The proposals, which were announced in the House on 26 October 2003, would see the phasing in of regulations in specified licensing areas from 2010 (for all new vehicles), with full compliance by 2020. The 2010 date has been proposed to accommodate a full public consultation process, to give sufficient time for vehicle manufacturers and converters to produce new models that meet the regulations, and to give the trade sufficient time to adapt to the change. In the period before regulations are introduced, local licensing authorities remain free to introduce their own accessibility policies and we encourage them to do so in consultation with disabled people locally.

Licensing Authorities in England and Wales not licensing accessible taxis at 31 March 2004

Alnwick
Babergh
Barrow-in-Furness
Blaby
Bolsover
Broadland
Copeland
Cotswold
East Northants
Eastleigh
Elmbridge
Gedling
Hambleton
Havant
Malvern Hills
Mendip
Mid Bedfordshire
Mid Suffolk
Monmouthshire
Rutland UA
South Bucks
South Cambridge
South Norfolk

Tewkesbury
Uttlesford
Waverley
West Lindsey

Source:
DfT survey of licensing authorities.

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has made of the percentage of buses with faulty ramps in *(a)* England and *(b)* each local authority in the last period for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement. [207728]

Charlotte Atkins: The Public Service Vehicles Accessibility Regulations require new buses over 22 passengers first used on or after 31 December 2000 to be accessible to wheelchair users. The requirements include the availability of a boarding aid (generally a ramp). An operator who does not comply with these regulations is guilty of an offence.

Buses are subject to annual roadworthiness inspections, spot checks and roadside inspections to ensure their safety and accessibility. Information on the reliability of individual components such as ramps is not collected separately but we are aware of a number of complaints from disabled people about poor reliability of power operated ramps.

The majority of power operated ramps are fitted to buses in London, and Transport for London has carried out detailed monitoring of the reliability of ramps fitted to these buses and has discussed performance with the operators concerned.

Yellow School Buses

Mr. Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what progress has been made in encouraging the use of yellow school buses as a means to cut traffic congestion. [207731]

Charlotte Atkins: We know from our evaluation of various small-scale yellow and other dedicated school bus schemes that well-designed schemes have the potential to reduce car dependency for journeys to school and the traffic congestion that results from this. However, care needs to be taken to ensure that schemes do not reduce levels of walking or cycling or undermine the viability of important commercial bus services.

We therefore want to encourage individual local authorities to consider school bus schemes as part of broader local transport planning and to decide whether or not they would be appropriate to their area. We will give capital bids for such schemes careful consideration, taking account of value for money, regional priorities and affordability. We approved £18.7 million funding for a yellow bus scheme serving 100 schools in West Yorkshire as part of the local transport settlement for 2004–05. Funding for this project is to be released in three phases—the second and third phases of funding are to be released subject to the first phase meeting its objectives with respect to modal switch from car.

In addition, the School Transport Bill will enable a small number of local authorities to develop innovative proposals to reduce car dependency on the school run. We expect pilot authorities to use the new legislation to support arrangements that offer a range of good quality, cost effective arrangements to the family car on the home to school journey which may include yellow or other dedicated school bus schemes.

ADVOCATE-GENERAL

Devolution

20. **Miss Begg:** To ask the Advocate-General what recent devolution issues have been raised with her in connection with the seizure of the assets of convicted drug dealers. [207426]

The Advocate-General: I received intimation of six cases involving the seizure of assets of convicted drugs dealers in 2004. Three were civil actions for the recovery of proceeds of crime under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002, and three were applications for confiscation orders in criminal proceedings, following conviction, under the Proceeds of Crime (Scotland) Act 1995.

21. **Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Advocate-General what devolution issues she has considered since 30 November 2004. [207427]

The Advocate-General: I would refer the hon. Lady to the answer I gave to questions numbers 16 to 19.

SCOTLAND

Lyons Review

6. **Mr. Donohoe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on the impact of the Lyons Review in areas of Scotland not named in the King Sturge report; and what role his Department is playing in public sector job relocation to Scotland. [207433]

Mrs. McGuire: The King Sturge report was intended to be used as a guide to departments when considering relocation away from Whitehall and is not definitive. My right hon. Friend has made the advantages of Scotland as a location clear to other Departments and has encouraged them to consider Scotland when they assess relocation options. My hon. Friend will be aware that we are scheduled to meet to discuss this matter further.

Child Trust Fund

7. **Jim Sheridan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the implementation in Scotland of the child trust fund. [207434]

Mrs. McGuire: My right hon. Friend discusses a wide range of issues with the Chancellor of the Exchequer. In June last year my right hon. Friend launched the Child Trust roadshow in Scotland for potential financial providers.

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the roll out of the child trust fund in Scotland; and if he will make a statement. [207438]

Mrs. McGuire: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave earlier today to my hon. Friend the Member for West Renfrewshire (Jim Sheridan).

Small Business (Regulation)

8. **Mr. Bellingham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he next expects to meet representatives of Scottish small businesses to discuss central Government regulation. [207435]

Mrs. McGuire: The Scotland Office maintains contact will all key business organisations in Scotland at both ministerial and official levels. Furthermore, I am a member of the Small Business Consultative Group that is convened and chaired by the Scottish Executive. This group last met on 13 December 2004 and a specialist sub group looking in greater depth at regulation will meet on 12 January. Representatives from small businesses will be present as well as officials from the Scotland Office at this meeting.

Cross-border Health Issues

10. **Pete Wishart:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he last met the First Minister to discuss cross-border health issues. [207437]

Mrs. McGuire: My right hon. Friend regularly meets with the First Minister to discuss a range of matters.

Economic Growth Differentials

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on economic growth differentials between Scotland and other parts of the UK. [207436]

Mr. Darling: I have regular discussions on a range of matters with my right, hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Growth in Scotland has closely matched that of the UK in recent years and was higher as recently as 2003, while future prospects are good.

Energy Policy

12. **Mr. Weir:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what recent discussions he has had with representatives of the renewable energy industry in Scotland on energy issues. [207439]

Mr. Darling: I have discussed the prospects for renewable energy in the course of various meetings and visits over recent months and saw a range of developments during my visit to Islay in November.

Fuel Poverty

13. **John Barrett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what action he is taking in conjunction with the Scottish Executive to help alleviate fuel poverty in Scotland. [207440]

Mrs. McGuire: Tackling fuel poverty is one of the Government's and Scottish Executive's key priorities within their wider policies on energy and social inclusion.

Ferry Subsidies

14. **Mr. Andrew Turner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he expects to discuss the level of ferry subsidies with the Scottish Executive. [207441]

Mr. Darling: Assistance for ferry services within Scotland and the level of subsidy provided is a devolved matter for the Scottish Parliament and Executive.

Industry/University Links

15. **Mr. Tynan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what discussions he has had with the First Minister on improving links between industry and universities. [207442]

Mr. Darling: I have frequent discussions with the First Minister on a range of topics. Enhancing links between industry and universities is recognised by both the Government and the Executive as means of helping to unlock competitive advantage.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Angola

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what role UK officials had in the IMF monitoring exercise in Angola; and what advice they have offered to the Government of Angola. [207694]

Hilary Benn: The Government of Angola and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have been engaged in talks for over a year about a staff monitored programme (SMP). Under an SMP, Angola would reach broad agreement on its macroeconomic policy approach, but without any linked IMF lending programme. An SMP is normally used by countries to demonstrate their track record of sound macroeconomic management in order to assist in achieving an international financial and investment standing. A key issue for Angola will be to ensure that all its revenues are captured in their budgets.

It is not yet clear that the political will exists in Angola to come to terms with the IMF. In the recent past, two programmes failed shortly after they had been agreed. The IMF is keen to avoid this happening again. A further IMF mission to discuss the Angola SMP will probably take place in January.

UK officials have no direct involvement in the IMF missions although we are strongly encouraging the Government of Angola to do all it can to respond to the IMF's requests, and reach agreement on a programme. DFID has funded some work on oil revenue transparency in coordination with the World Bank which the IMF have found useful in their discussions on the fiscal position. Furthermore, DFID has advised the Government of Angola that DFID is willing to provide technical assistance to ensure the successful implementation of an IMF programme.

CDC/Actis Capital

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much private investment capital CDC/Actis Capital has attracted for private sector businesses in developing countries in *(a)* 2002, *(b)* 2003 and *(c)* 2004 as a result of its own investment activities in these countries. [206846]

Hilary Benn: Details of the third party funds raised by CDC, Actis and Aureos in 2002–04 are shown in the following tables.

2002

Aureos Central America Fund

Investors	*US$ million*
CDC	10.0
European development finance institutions (2)	15.0
International development banks (2)	11.3
Total committed capital	36.3

2003

Aureos West Africa Fund

Investors	*US$ million*
CDC	15.4
European development finance institutions (3)	28.9
International private institutions (1)	2.7
Local financial institutions (2)	3.0
Total committed capital	50.0

Aureos East Africa Fund

Investors	*US$ million*
CDC	8.0
European development finance institutions (4)	25.5
International development banks (1)	4.0
Local financial institutions (2)	2.5
Total committed capital	40.0

Aureos Southern Africa Fund

Investors	*US$ million*
CDC	15.0
European development finance institutions (3)	29.0
International development banks (1)	6.0
Total committed capital	50.0

2004

Actis Malaysia Fund LP

Investors	*US$ million*
CDC	40.0
Pension schemes (1)	20.0
Total committed capital	60.0

Aureos South East Asia Fund

Investors	*US$ million*
CDC	20.0
European development finance institutions (1)	20.0
Total committed capital	40.0

Actis China Fund

Investors	*US$ million*
CDC	75.0
International development banks (1)	25.0
Total committed capital	100.0

At project level, companies in which CDC invests will typically attract greater private co-investment and have enhanced access to commercial borrowing.

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) if he will list investments CDC/Actis Capital has made in *(a)* 2002, *(b)* 2003 and *(c)* 2004 by (i) amount, (ii) country and (iii) percentage of the total CDC/Actis Capital portfolio; [206847]

(2) what percentage of its disbursements CDC/Actis Capital has invested in *(a)* least developed, *(b)* other low-income, *(c)* low and middle-income and *(d)* upper middle-income countries in (i) 2002, (ii) 2003 and (iii) 2004. [207138]

Hilary Benn: CDC's investments in 2002–04 by country, amount and percentage of the portfolio were as follows:

2002

		£ million	*Percentage*
1	Peru, Argentina and Chile	48.3	6.0
2	Latin America and SE Asia	17.7	2.2
3	Dominican Republic	17.3	2.1
4	Africa, Asia and Latin America	14.8	1.8
5	Pan South Asia	8.8	1.1
6	El Salvador	6.6	0.8
7	Kenya	5.9	0.7
8	Pakistan	5.5	0.7
9	Egypt	5.5	0.7
10	Indonesia/Papua New Guinea	5.3	0.7
11	India	5.1	0.6
12	India	4.4	0.5
13	Mexico	3.7	0.5
14	Bolivia	3.4	0.4
15	India	3.3	0.4
16	Costa Rica	3.2	0.4
17	China	2.8	0.4
18	Pakistan	2.2	0.3
19	Guyana	1.9	0.2
20	Mozambique	1.9	0.2
21	Sri Lanka	1.6	0.2
22	Zambia	1.3	0.2
23	Nicaragua	1.3	0.2
24	Southern Africa	1.0	0.1
25	Others (each under £1 million)	13.5	1.7
	Total new investments in 2002	186.3	23.1
	Total CDC portfolio at 31 December 2002	805.1	—

2003

		£ million	*Percentage*
1	Bangladesh	83.6	9.4
2	Tanzania	56.0	6.3
3	India	19.1	2.1
4	South Africa	18.8	2.1
5	Algeria	15.8	1.8
6	Kenya	10.1	1.1
7	South Africa	9.8	1.1
8	China	6.8	0.8
9	Costa Rica	6.5	0.7
10	South Africa	5.0	0.6
11	El Salvador	3.6	0.4
12	Tanzania	3.6	0.4
13	South Africa	3.0	0.3
14	Tanzania	2.5	0.3
15	China	2.0	0.2
16	Uganda	1.9	0.2
17	Pan Africa	1.8	0.2
18	Sri Lanka	1.7	0.2
19	Costa Rica	1.4	0.2
20	Zambia	1.4	0.2
21	Tanzania	1.1	0.1
22	South Africa	1.0	0.1
23	Others (each under £1 million)	4.0	0.4
	Total new investments in 2003	260.5	29.3
	Total CDC portfolio at 31 December 2003	888.6	—

2004

		£ million	*Percentage*
1	Egypt	38.4	4.4
2	Tanzania	26.1	3.0
3	Nigeria	13.1	1.5
4	Nigeria	11.2	1.3
5	Bolivia	10.3	1.2
6	India	7.9	0.9
7	Pan Africa	7.5	0.9
8	China	6.3	0.7
9	Nigeria	6.1	0.7
10	Malaysia	5.9	0.7
11	South Africa	5.6	0.6
12	China	5.5	0.6
13	South Africa	5.3	0.6
14	India	5.1	0.6
15	Rwanda	2.6	0.3
16	Burkina Faso	2.0	0.2
17	Senegal	1.5	0.2
18	Tanzania	1.2	0.1
19	Cuba	1.1	0.1
20	Nigeria	0.6	0.1
21	Ghana	0.6	0.1
22	Others (each under £1 million)	4.7	0.5
	Total new investments in 2004	168.6	19.1
	Total CDC portfolio at 31 December 2004	881.8	—

Under its Investment Policy, a copy of which I placed in the Library last year, CDC is required to invest solely in, or for the benefit of, the countries included in the "CDC Universe". This is made up of the countries classified as low-income or middle-income by the World Bank. It is required to report against two investment targets, to make at least 70 per cent. of its new investments each year in countries with an annual GNI of US$1,750 pc or less and at least 50 per cent. of its new investments in sub Saharan Africa or South Asia. On a 5-year rolling basis, CDC's performance against these targets is as follows:

			Percentage
Investment Policy Target	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*[1]
70 per cent. ($1,750 GNI poor less)	75.4	74.6	76.8
50 per cent. (sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia)	44.3	50.3	55.9

[1] Estimated—final figures not yet available

Although CDC does not routinely report on investment by the country groups that you mention, the data given above shows that CDC's annual investments may be attributed as follows:

	Percentage	*£ million*
2002		
Low Income countries	30.3	56.4
(of which £3.2 million was in Least Developed Countries)		
Low Middle Income Countries	41.4	77.1
Upper Middle Income Countries	28.3	52.8

	Percentage	*£ million*
2003		
Low Income countries (of which £86.9 million was in Least Developed Countries)	69.9	182.1
Low Middle Income Countries	27.1	70.5
Upper Middle Income Countries	3	7.9
2004		
Low Income countries (of which £6.1 million was in Least Developed Countries)	49.9	84.2
Low Middle Income Countries	46.6	78.5
Upper Middle Income Countries	3.5	5.9

India

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what discussions his Department has had with the Indian Government concerning sex discrimination in India. [206088]

Mr. Gareth Thomas *[holding answer 21 December 2004]:* The Government of India (GoI) recognises that gender discrimination limits the prospects for development progress in India. It has a well-articulated policy and clearly mandated institutional structures, including the current tenth plan, for addressing gender discrimination. India has also played a lead role in ratifying gender-related UN conventions and international covenants.

However, a falling ratio of girls to boys, in rich and poor states, and among better off and poorer households, reflects continuing discrimination against women and girls. Violence against women and girls persists. The GoI recognises this in its reporting under the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). The GoI has included several Bills related to improving the status of women in its forthcoming parliamentary session.

Over the last two years, the Department for International Development (DFID) has engaged closely with the GoI on the design of the large national Sarva Shikshya Abhyan (Education-for-All) and reproductive and child health programmes, developing their focus on the most vulnerable and hard to reach people in India, especially those who suffer multiple discrimination and social exclusion, particularly girls and women among marginalised groups. Approaches to improving outcomes for women and girls are explicitly included in the agreed designs. The GoI measures success in these programmes against progress towards gender equality.

DFID also engages with Governments in its focus states on issues of discrimination and ensuring that women participate in design and monitoring of programmes. This state level work includes focused programmes that empower and address the practical needs and priorities of women and other marginalised groups, such as through micro-credit, development of gender policies, awareness raising and livelihood improvements, e.g. through the Andhra Pradesh Rural Livelihoods and the Western Orissa Rural Livelihoods programmes. In 2003, DFID supported analysis of the Orissa budget from a gender perspective; key sectors, including the Orissa state health strategy and water and sanitation reforms, now seek to take account of the particular needs of women and girls.

DFID worked with the United Nations Development Programme in India to include gender analysis in their support for state Human Development Reports. Discussions of access to justice and support for police reforms have both paid particular attention to the needs of women. In all programmes with the GoI that DFID supports, we seek to have monitoring and evaluation data disaggregated by gender in order to inform policy decisions. DFID also supports civil society to work with government to reduce gender discrimination.

Iraq

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what action he has taken since his letter of 24 August to the hon. Member for Linlithgow to help restoration of the marshes of southern Iraq. [206895]

Hilary Benn: DFID maintains close contact with the United Nations Environment Programme on a range of environmental issues in Iraq. United Nations agencies are providing support for environmental management in the Iraqi marshlands and for Iraqi refugees returning to marshland areas. Other bilateral donors are also offering assistance for marshland restoration. DFID's own programme in southern Iraq focuses on employment generation, infrastructure rehabilitation and support for local government.

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much aid has been provided in support of heritage protection in Iraq; and what form that aid has taken. [207077]

Hilary Benn: DFID spent £80,000 to fund a Culture and Tourism adviser to work with the Coalition Provisional Authority in southern Iraq from January to May 2004. The adviser took forward projects to protect archaeological sites and re-establish traditional festivals in the southern governorates of Iraq. He also produced a sector report on tourism and culture which has now been adopted by the Iraqi Interim Ministers for Tourism and for Culture.

The United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) is working with the Iraqi National Museum and the Iraqi State Board of Antiquities on projects to protect Iraqi cultural heritage amounting to over $2 million. UNESCO is conducting training courses for Iraqi officials on archaeological protection and Iraqi cultural heritage preservation.

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the plans are for the replacement of food rationing in Iraq by cash subsidy; what the reasons are for the proposed change; what measures are proposed to protect the vulnerable from the potential adverse effects of such a change; what assessment has been made of the possibility of changes in the crime rate resulting from the proposed change; and if he will make a statement. [207199]

Hilary Benn: The Government of Iraq has said that it is committed over the medium term, to enhancing the effectiveness of social safety nets in Iraq by moving from a food ration system, which handed out virtually free food to the entire population of Iraq, to a cash distribution system, targeted at the poor and unemployed. The aim will be to help domestic agriculture, encourage private trade and remove price distortions, at the same time as ensuring that families in need are properly safeguarded. The details have yet to be determined, and are expected to be followed up by the Iraqi Transitional Government after the forthcoming elections. We support the reform in principle. DFID staff and advisers will continue to maintain contact with the Iraqi authorities, and with interested international organisations including the IMF, the World Bank and the World Food Programme, to ensure that the interests of poor and vulnerable families in Iraq are protected. A well-managed reform process should not have any adverse impact on levels of crime in Iraq.

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Tooting (Tom Cox) of 13 December 2004, *Official Report*, columns 819–20W, on Iraq, where the interim Iraqi Government and United States forces stockpiled the supplies of water, food and medicine prior to the military operation. [207277]

Hilary Benn: The Iraqi Interim Government (IIG) and United States Marines report that they had stockpiled essential supplies in the city of Fallujah prior to military action. The Marines also kept supplies at a nearby base which were brought into the city as necessary. The IIG ministries also report that extra supplies were available in Baghdad, for transfer to Fallujah in trucks by the Iraqi Ministry of Health; they also positioned essential supplies in the area surrounding Fallujah.

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) what assessment he has made of the joint proposal of the Iraqi Interim Authority and the International Monetary Fund to replace the food ration to Iraqi families with a conditional cash payment; [207522]

(2) what discussions he has had with *(a)* the Iraqi Interim Government and *(b)* the International Monetary Fund on their joint proposal to replace the food ration to Iraqi families with a conditional cash payment. [207521]

Hilary Benn: I will write to the hon. Member for North-West Leicestershire shortly.

Namibia

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the nature of European Development Fund support for Namibia. [207126]

Hilary Benn: The current European Development Fund programme in Namibia is worth a total of £91 million over the six year period 2002–07. A country strategy, focussing on rural development and human resource development, was agreed between the European Commission and the Government of Namibia in June 2002.

A review of the programme, carried out last year, concluded that the size and focal areas of the programme remained appropriate. The review was approved by the European Development Fund Committee in October 2004.

A new €53 million Rural Poverty Reduction Programme was also approved by the Committee in October 2004.

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

Stored Works of Art

40. **Mr. Gordon Prentice:** To ask the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire, representing the House of Commons Commission, what the cost is of storing the paintings and works of art held by the House. [207403]

Sir Archy Kirkwood: Items from the House collection not on display are kept in two basement storerooms, at no additional cash cost to the House. When works are displaced during the summer works programme, larger paintings are occasionally stored with specialist companies for which the House pays a fee.

Parliamentary Education Unit

41. **Dr. Whitehead:** To ask the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire, representing the House of Commons Commission, what plans he has to support the expansion of the Parliamentary Education Unit to cope with demand for educational visits. [207404]

Sir Archy Kirkwood: The Commission agreed in November to fund an additional staff post within the Education Unit to focus on outreach to young people, with a principal focus of the job being on building links with local education authorities, as recommended by the Modernisation Committee. The Commission looks forward to considering well founded proposals for the expansion of the Unit's work. It has also asked for further exploration of the possibility of extension of the current autumn visits programme run by the Unit to run all year round.

42. **Mr. Lazarowicz:** To ask the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire, representing the House of Commons Commission, what plans he has to support the expansion of the Parliamentary Education Unit to cope with demand for educational visits. [207405]

Sir Archy Kirkwood: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given today to the hon. Member for Southampton, Test (Dr. Whitehead).

Kettles

Mr. Steen: To ask the honourable Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire, representing the House of Commons Commission pursuant to his Answer of 16 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1225W, on kettles, whether a comparative assessment was made of the health and safety risks posed by kettles and cisterns of boiling water; and if he will arrange for the issue of rubber gloves to all kitchens in the Parliamentary Estate to protect against the danger of scalding. [207704]

Sir Archy Kirkwood: An assessment has been made of the comparative health and safety risks posed by kettles and hot water boilers. Boilers are considered to be safer. It is not considered practical to issue rubber gloves in all kitchens, but the option of new cool touch taps is being investigated.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Documents

Sue Doughty: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what his Department's policy is in relation to the storage of documents and the use of shredders; and whether this policy has been reviewed in the past 12 months. [206757]

Yvette Cooper: Documents are stored either close to where they are used or by an off-site storage contractor. Material of no value as a record is disposed of, preferably by recycling, as soon as it is no longer required. Documents that form part of the official record are stored until they reach the end of their retention periods or they are selected for permanent preservation and transferred to The National Archives. When they are no longer required, official records are disposed of by shredding or other appropriate means and paper is recycled where practicable. Retention periods are determined on the basis of business need and guidance issued by The National Archives. Further details can be found at: http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/recordsmanagement/. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's policy on the storage and disposal of records has not changed in the past 12 months.

Fire Control Rooms

Patrick Mercer: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the relationship between the change in the number of emergency fire controls and the Government's policy on regional government. [207300]

Mr. Raynsford: There is no relationship. The plan to replace the existing 46 control rooms in England with nine regional control centres is being implemented for reasons of resilience and public safety.

Fire Service

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) at what point he intends to use his reserve powers to impose a national negotiating structure for fire service pay; [206069]

(2) what progress is being made towards agreement on a new national negotiating structure for fire service pay. [206070]

Mr. Raynsford: Government hopes that reform of negotiating machinery for the Fire and Rescue Service can be achieved by agreement between the employers and the Fire Brigades Union (FBU). I understand that negotiations about reform were re-opened by the employers late last year. As stated at Committee stage of the Fire and Rescue Services Bill (now Act) 2004, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not want to put an arbitrary time limit on these difficult and complex discussions. Government will seek an up-date on the negotiations later this month.

IT (Disciplinary Procedures)

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many staff in his Department have *(a)* received official warnings and *(b)* faced disciplinary procedures following breaches of IT policy in each year since 1997. [205803]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was established following Machinery of Government changes in May 2002.

Since then the number of staff who faced disciplinary procedures for breaches of IT policy in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, its Agencies and Government Offices was as follows:

	Number
2002	0
2003	3
2004	5

Official warnings are included in and form part of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's disciplinary procedures.

Local Government Finance

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much total Government grant per capita has been given to each local authority in England, including fire authorities, in each year since 1997. [207336]

Mr. Raynsford: The available information has been made available in the Library of the House.

Older People's Champions

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the councils which have introduced older people's champions. [202916]

Dr. Ladyman: I have been asked to reply.

Those who champion the development of services on behalf of older people do so on a voluntary basis and there is no requirement for councils to tell us whether they have an older people's champion or not. However, from our day-to-day contact with local authorities and an informal database set up for those champions who wish to share their experiences, we believe that most councils do have at least one older people's champion.

Phone Masts

Mr. Ben Chapman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what representations he has received from the Campaign to Protect Rural England about mobile phone masts. [207732]

Keith Hill: In September 2004 I received a letter from the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) which included a copy of "Telecommunications Development—A CPRE Briefing". CPRE wrote in similar terms to the Director for Planning and the policy team leader responsible for planning policies for telecommunication developments. The policy team leader also met with CPRE representatives to discuss their concerns.

Planning Appeals

Dr. Pugh: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment has been made of the reasons for the recent increase in the number of planning appeals. [207301]

Keith Hill: In February 2004 the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister published research commissioned from Arups on "Investigating the Increasing Volume of Planning Appeals in England".

This work and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's own assessments lead us to conclude that rising numbers of planning applications taken together with some increase in refusal rates have been the main statistical factors behind the increase in the number of planning appeals. There is a strong perception that the reduction in the period for submitting an appeal from six months to three months has led to applicants submitting appeals without first making any attempt to negotiate an amended application with the local planning authority and that this has also contributed to the rise in appeal numbers. I announced on 16 December that it was our intention to extend the period for submitting planning appeals from three to six months, which would have the effect of reversing the change which was introduced in September 2003. The orders giving effect to that change were laid before Parliament on 22 December 2004.

Planning Policy Statement 6

Brian Cotter: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he intends to publish the consultation responses to the draft Planning Policy Statement 6 issued in December 2003. [207036]

Keith Hill: The consultation responses to draft Planning Policy Statement 6: Planning for Town Centres will be made available in the Library of the House, when the final version of Planning Policy Statement 6 is published.

Brian Cotter: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether his Department has received a response from the Small Business Service to the draft Planning Policy Statement 6 issued in December 2003; and whether a small firms impact assessment has been undertaken in connection with PPS6. [207061]

Keith Hill: The Small Business Service submitted comments on draft Planning Policy Statement 6 on 3 March 2004. A small firms impact test has been carried out and the results will form part of the final Regulatory Impact Assessment which will published once the final version of Planning Policy Statement 6 has been published.

Brian Cotter: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he intends to publish Planning Policy Statement 6: Planning for Town Centres. [207065]

Keith Hill: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister aims to publish Planning Policy Statement 6: Planning for Town Centres in the spring.

Special Advisers

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many special advisers there are in the Department, broken down by civil service pay grade. [206500]

Phil Hope: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Member for South Shields (Mr. Miliband) on 21 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1640W.

Stolen Property

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many civil servants from his Office have *(a)* faced disciplinary proceedings as a result of allegations of theft, *(b)* been charged with theft and *(c)* been dismissed following theft allegations in each year since 1997. [206399]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was established following Machinery of Government changes in May 2002.

Since then the number of staff who faced disciplinary action, were charged, dismissed and convicted in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, its Agencies and Government Offices was as follows:

	Number
2002	0
2003	0
2004	1

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Voter Registration

28. **Dr. Pugh:** To ask the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what effect the introduction of rolling electoral registration has had on voter registration. [207414]

Mr. Leslie: I am not aware that any study has to date been carried out into the effect of rolling registration on voter registration. However, the independent Electoral Commission is currently undertaking research into the extent and nature of non-registration in Great Britain, which I understand includes assessing the impact of rolling registration on levels of voter registration. The Commission expects to publish its findings by summer this year, which the Government will wish to consider carefully.

Dr. Pugh: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what research the Department has conducted into the ways in which young people and students register as voters. [207296]

Mr. Leslie: My Department is currently carrying out research into the propensity of young people to register to vote. We expect the results to be available later this year.

Freedom of Information Act

29. **Norman Baker:** To ask the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will make a statement on the operation of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. [207415]

Mr. Leslie: The Government promised Freedom of Information legislation in our manifesto, and I am delighted that the new Act is now fully operational. It is still early days in the life of these new access rights for the public, but I am confident that there will be a real difference with this statutory "right to know".

Legal Services Commission

30. **Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what steps are being taken to improve the quality of legal services for immigration cases funded by the Legal Services Commission. [207416]

Mr. Lammy: Both the Secretary of State and the Legal Services Commission want to drive up the quality of publicly funded advice given in asylum and immigration cases. This is in the interest of taxpayers and those who use the service. The Legal Services Commission will require all practitioners providing publicly funded services to have appropriate accreditation from 1 April this year. Accreditation requires the practitioner to show that he or she has the right skills and knowledge to do the job.

Fast-track Criminal Cases

31. **Hugh Bayley:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what discretion criminal courts have to fast-track specific cases. [207417]

Mr. Leslie: Subject to certain constraints, the Crown court and each magistrates court have discretion to fast-track specific cases where there are factors which justify so doing.

Law Society (Disciplinary Issues)

32. **Tony Lloyd:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what recent discussions he has had with the Law Society about disciplinary issues. [207418]

Mr. Lammy: When I last visited the offices of the Law Society's Consumer Complaints Service (CCS) on 11 May 2004, I had detailed discussions with the society on how they are improving standards for consumers, including disciplinary and enforcement issues.

Legal Aid (ASBOs)

33. **Bob Spink:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many applications for legal aid have been *(a)* applied for and *(b)* granted (i) to resist the imposition of and (ii) to appeal against antisocial behaviour orders. [207419]

Mr. Lammy: The number of applications is not known since practitioners are not required to keep records of refused applications. Neither is the number of granted applications known since the Legal Services Commission's information/systems have until now not recorded information on ASBOs separately. However, antisocial behaviour orders are growing in numbers and the Commission are updating their systems so that from March 2005 this information will be collected.

Mental Capacity Bill

34. **Mr. Gray:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what discussions he has had with the Roman Catholic Church about the Mental Capacity Bill. [207420]

Mr. Lammy: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Wirral, South (Mr. Chapman) today.

Legal Aid

35. **Mr. Flook:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the outturn of legal aid expenditure against the Budget has been in each year since 1997. [207421]

Mr. Lammy: Expenditure on the legal aid fund, between 1997–98 and 2003–04, was in cash terms, as follows:

1997–98: £27 million below budget of £1,553 million

1998–99: £12 million below budget of £1,635 million

1999–2000: £61 million below budget of £1,612 million

2000–01: £29 million below budget of £1,693 million

2001–02: £22 million over budget of £1,694 million

2002–03: £37 million over budget of £1,871 million

2003–04: £16 million over budget of £2,061 million

When the legal aid budget overspent, resources were transferred from other areas of LCD or DCA, to make up the difference.

Ross Cranston: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what estimate he has made of the amount of interest generated on solicitors' client accounts which are not returned to clients in the last year for which figures are available; and what assessment he has made of the practical problems of introducing a policy of using this interest to fund legal aid. [201917]

Mr. Lammy: My Department has not conducted any specific research into the likely amount of interest generated on solicitors' client accounts which are not returned to clients, but other sources (new Law Journal, December 17 1993) estimated a figure of £60 million per year in 1993. It was recognised, however, that this would be dependent on the rate of interest to be applied, and also the extent to which solicitors must account the interest to clients. I am aware that many other countries use this interest to fund public legal services. No formal assessment has been made of the practical problems of using such interest to fund legal aid in England and Wales.

Departmental Files

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many departmental files have been destroyed in each of the past five years. [203344]

Mr. Leslie: In accordance with its normal policies and disposal schedules, the Department, excluding the Court Service, has destroyed the following number of files in each of the last five years:

	Records
2000	2,114
2001	0
2002	1,159
2003	1,122
2004 (1 January-30 September)	4,306

The increased number of destructions in 2004 was due to a requirement to clear a backlog which had developed. The need to deal with this became imperative in March 2004 when the Court Service and the DCAHQ and Associated Offices Registries were amalgamated.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs on how many occasions between 31 March 2002 and 31 March 2003 the Lord Chancellor's special advisers travelled abroad in an official capacity; what places were visited; and how much each visit cost. [207180]

Mr. Leslie: I refer the hon. Member to my answer on 1 September 2003, *Official Report*, column 782W.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

E-mails

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on her Department's policy regarding the retention of e-mails in electronic form *(a)* after and *(b)* up to 1 January 2005; and what instructions have been given regarding the deletion of e-mails prior to 1 January 2005. [206956]

Mr. Caborn: The DCMS policy is that e-mails which show evidence of actions or decisions or other value added information, and are for public record, must be printed out and added to the traditional paper file. Once printed out and added to file, or archived electronically, such e-mails are to be deleted immediately from the day-to-day e-mail folder. In order to prevent the build-up of e-mails (which would cause the IT system to crash) staff are to undertake a daily clear out of all of the messages that are no longer required. All e-mails are automatically deleted after 12 months (on the assumption that e-mails for the public record will have been printed out and added to the paper file as mentioned).

No additional instructions have been given to DCMS staff regarding the deletion of e-mails prior to 1 January 2005. However, in the context of readying DCMS records to ensure they are in good order and speedily and efficiently accessible to enable compliance with our statutory duty (from 1 January 2005) to respond to requests for information, staff have been reminded of the DCMS deletion policy.

Freedom of Information

Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many staff in her Department were employed to deal with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 issues in *(a)* 2001, *(b)* 2002, *(c)* 2003 and *(d)* 2004; and how many staff are budgeted to deal with Freedom of Information Act 2000 issues in (i) 2005 and (ii) 2006. [205033]

Mr. Caborn: No additional staffing were deployed on Freedom of Information work in 2001 and 2002. For 2003, one whole-time equivalent was deployed with this increasing to 1.5 whole-time equivalent for 2005. This level is expected to continue through 2005 and 2006. This is supported by a local support network made up of existing staff

In 2004, additional resourcing requirements for IT and legal issues have been met through use of externally contracted personnel.

Live Music

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what methodology was used in MORI's Survey of Live Music Staged in England and Wales in 2003–04 commissioned by her Department, with particular reference to the Minister for Sport's conclusion that an estimated 1.7 million gigs had been staged in the past year in bars, clubs and restaurants whose main business was not putting on live music. [207524]

Mr. Caborn: A full description of the methodology used is provided in MORI's report Survey of Live Music Staged in England & Wales in 2003–04, which is available on the DCMS website at:

<http://www.culture.gov.uk/global/research/research_by_dcms/live_music_exec_summary.htm.>

I am arranging for copies of the report to be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

For the sample, categories of venues were selected that did not appear to be reliant upon live music provision for their existence. MORI arrived at their estimate of 1.7 million live music events by calculating the average number of events being staged at each venue type in the sample, and then multiplying this figure by the total estimated number of venues in each category within England and Wales. Venues sampled were asked how many live events they had staged in the past 12 months, and were offered a series of ranges to choose from (e.g. 8–10,11–20, 21–31, 32–40, 40 +). To calculate an average, MORI sensibly took the mid point for each range on the assumption that, on a normal distribution, they would expect roughly an equal proportion to fall above and below this.

For respondents who said that their venue had staged 40+ live events over the past 12 months, MORI assumed an average of 60 live events each year—a realistic, if perhaps slightly conservative, estimate given that the number of such events each year could range between 41 and 150 (given three live music nights a week). In the unlikely scenario that all venues in the 41+ category only staged 41 live events in the past year, MORI calculated that the estimated number of live music events would be 1.3 million.

CABINET OFFICE

Departmental Equipment

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many items of electrical equipment were used by her Department in the last year for which figures are available, broken down by *(a)* cost and *(b)* number of each type of item. [205739]

Mr. Miliband: It is not possible to provide the information requested as it is not held in this detail and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

IT (Disciplinary Procedures)

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many staff in the Cabinet Office have *(a)* received official warnings and *(b)* faced disciplinary procedures following breaches of IT policy in each year since 1997. [205819]

Mr. Miliband: The number of Cabinet Office staff who faced disciplinary procedures following breaches of Information Technology (IT) policy in the years 1998 to 2004 inclusive are shown in the table. All these staff received an official warning. Data for 1997 is not available.

Breaches of IT policy

	Number of staff who faced disciplinary procedures
1998	4
1999	3
2000	10
2001	5
2002	2
2003	2
2004	4

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Burma

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the most recent representations are which he has made directly to the Burmese military regime regarding atrocities by the Burmese military against the *(a)* Karen, *(b)* Karenni and *(c)* Shan people. [207049]

Mr. Alexander: I have not had any direct contact with the Burmese military regime in Rangoon.

I met the Burmese ambassador on 29 November and pressed for political reform in Burma, full respect for human rights and for all groups in Burma, including ethnic nationalities, to play a full part in national reconciliation.

We will continue to raise our concerns.

Colombia

David Burnside: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with *(a)* the Government of Colombia and *(b)* the Government of the Irish Republic on assisting in returning to Colombia the IRA/Sinn Fein members convicted there. [206939]

Mr. Rammell *[holding answer 10 January 2005]*: None. This is a matter between the Irish and Colombian Governments. It would be inappropriate for the UK to intervene.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much the Department spent on lawyers in each year since 1997; how many *(a)* actions, *(b)* settlements and *(c)* court cases there were in each year and what the costs of each settlement were. [206450]

Mr. Straw: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office incurred the following costs instructing Treasury Solicitors and counsel through Treasury Solicitors in each year since 1997:

Financial year	*Cases worked on in year*	*Total (£)*
1997–98	96	176,267.56
1998–99	93	218,737.88
1999–2000	101	245,547.42
2000–01	92	225,325.71
2001–02	99	268,135.22
2002–03	90	936,839.43
2003–04	91	419,765.91
2004–05	91	407,330.34
Total	—	2,897,949.47

The figures are further broken down for employment tribunal cases as set out in the following table. A further breakdown of the total figure could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Tribunal	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
Equal Pay	—	—	—	—	1	—	—
Sex Discrimination	1	—	3	—	2	1	2
Race Discrimination	1	3	4	—	—	1	1
Disability Discrimination	—	—	2	2	—	—	—
Unfair Dismissal	2	1	3	3	6	5	—

Costs (£)

	1998	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
Awarded against FCO	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Awarded against applicants	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Cases settled	10,000	2,000.00	13,360	500.00	38,750	500.00	0.00
Litigation	—	—	26,905.54	107,743.74	56,244.05	56,122.71	24,469.63
Total cost per year	10,000.00	2,000.00	40,265.54	108,243.74	94,994.05	56,622.71	24.469.63

Figures for the costs of other legal services could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

This answer is limited to cases handled by Treasury Solicitors, this being the only readily available information. There are no centrally maintained records for payments for other legal services obtained by various parts of the Office. Information on the costs of these services could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Records on individual Employment Tribunal cases are available since 1998 but cost information on individual cases has only been held since 2000.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the cost of travel within the UK for the Department was in each year since 1997; and how much of this was spent on *(a)* hire cars, *(b)* helicopter hire, *(c)* hotel accommodation and *(d)* subsistence. [206468]

Mr. Alexander: The total cost of travel within the UK for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in the years requested is as follows:

FY	£
1997–98	869,842.26
1998–99	815,173.24
1999–2000	966,637.06
2000–01	1,048,670.89
2001–02	1,055,879.66
2002–03	1,238,242.38
2003–04	1,428,115.92

Information kept is not broken down into the specific categories requested and this could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many overseas trips, and at what total cost, have been made by his Department in each year since 1997; and what the costs of *(a)* flights, *(b)* internal travel, *(c)* hotel accommodation and *(d)* subsistence were of each trip. [206653]

Mr. Alexander: The total cost of overseas travel for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in the years requested is as follows:

FY	£
1997–98	8,958,084.29
1998–99	10,279,393.92
1999–2000	9,484,426.58
2000–01	9,866,667.15
2001–02	11,446,108.54
2002–03	10,061,979.87
2003–04	10,354,531.27

Information held is not broken down into the specific categories requested and this could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Documents

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what his Department's policy is in relation to the storage and deletion of emails; and whether this policy has been reviewed in the past 12 months; [206760]

(2) what his Department's policy is in relation to the storage of documents and the use of shredders; and whether this policy has been reviewed in the past 12 months. [206761]

Mr. Straw: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) continues to implement well established policies and procedures for the review and disposal of files and documents in accordance with its administrative needs, the requirements of the Public Records Act and its obligations under the Freedom of Information Act.

E-mails and documents that form part of the official record are kept for as long as business needs require and are stored corporately in accordance with FCO records management procedures.

There has been no change to this policy in the past 12 months, apart from a reduction in the period of retention for consular case files, which was cut in 2004 from six to three years after last action, to ensure FCO compliance with Principle 7 of the Data Protection Act.

Eritrea

Mr. Colman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he has made representations to the Eritrean Government concerning the imprisonment of 400 people for their Christian faith. [207192]

Mr. Mullin: We raise the issue of religious freedom with the Eritrean Government regularly. I raised the matter with President Isaias in Asmara during my visit there last January and our ambassador raised it most recently on 13 December. We will continue to make clear our concern.

Hostages (Afghanistan)

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what involvement the Government had in the recent release of three UN workers in Afghanistan. [201974]

Mr. Rammell: The Afghan authorities and United Nations officials led the effort to gain the hostages' safe release. We worked closely with them throughout. HMG do not negotiate with terrorists/kidnappers but we are willing to talk on humanitarian grounds and listen to what they have to say (as indicated by my right hon. Friends the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary during the kidnap of Kenneth Bigley in September).

Mangla Dam

Mr. Byrne: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make representations to the President of Pakistan on the possible adverse effects on local people of the extension of the Mangla Dam. [205741]

Mr. Alexander: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has no immediate plans to raise the issue of the Mangla Dam with the President of Pakistan.

This project is a matter for the Pakistani authorities. However, we understand the concerns involved and welcome the commitment of the Pakistani government to help all those who are likely to be adversely affected by the project.

Pakistan

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the President of Pakistan on honour killings. [205633]

Mr. Rammell *[holding answer 21 December 2004]:* My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has not recently raised the issue of honour killings in Pakistan with President Musharraf.

On 17 December the EU Presidency, on behalf of all EU partners, raised with the Government of Pakistan the issue of honour killings in the context of an EU demarche on human rights issues. We have welcomed President Musharraf's statements denouncing honour killings and the Bill passed by the Pakistan National Assembly in October 2004 which addressed certain aspects of honour killings.

Special Advisers

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many special advisers there are in the Department, broken down by civil service pay grade. [206503]

Mr. Straw: Two. Both in pay band 3.

I also refer the hon. Member to the answer my hon. Friend the Minister for the Cabinet Office gave to him on 21 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1640W.

Torture

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make it his policy to regard as not valid information which he believes to have been obtained by torture. [205277]

Mr. Straw: The UK vehemently opposes torture as a matter of fundamental principle. The UK intelligence and security agencies carefully evaluate the intelligence they receive against a range of factors; any concerns about the source of the intelligence or the means by which it may have been obtained would be taken into account. Where we are helping other countries to develop their own counter-terrorism capability, we ensure that our training or other assistance promotes human rights compliance.

UK Trade and Investment

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what *(a)* administration and *(b)* administration capital resources were consumed by his Department in meeting UK Trade and Investment's objectives of (i) enhancing competitiveness of companies in the UK through overseas trade and investment and (ii) ensuring a continuing high level of quality foreign direct investment in 2004–05; and what provision has been made for 2005–06. [206916]

Mr. Alexander: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office's administration and administration capital provisions to meet UK Trade and Investment's objectives for the current financial year (2004–05) amount to £144 million. UK Trade and Investment's Resource Accounts for 2003–04 (the last year available) record that the combined amounts of FCO administration and administration capital consumed in meeting UK Trade and Investment's objectives were:

	£ million
To enhance competitiveness of companies in the UK through overseas trade and investment	131.7
To ensure a continuing high level of quality foreign direct investment	12.1
Total	143.8

The out-turn figures for 2004–05 are expected to be similar. The provision for 2005–06 will be basically similar, and will reflect the conditions attached to UK Trade and Investment's SR 2004 settlement to increase the proportion of expenditure in relation to the second of these objectives.

West Papua

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the human rights situation in West Papua. [205891]

Mr. Alexander: We have raised the question of human rights in Papua with the Indonesian Government, most recently during the visit by Dr. Michael Williams, my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary's Special Adviser to Indonesia in December 2004. We believe the new Government is actively seeking to resolve the conflict. We are aware of reports of human rights abuses in Papua. We will continue to monitor the situation.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Bankruptcies

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many bankruptcies have been registered in each year in the UK since 1990. [207755]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The number of bankruptcies registered each year in the UK, and by country, is given in the following table:

	UK Total	*England and Wales*	*Scotland (Sequestrations)*	*Northern Ireland*
1990	16,694	12,058	4,350	286
1991	30,664	22,632	7,665	367
1992	43,357	32,106	10,845	406
1993	38,318	31,016	6,828	474
1994	28,254	25,634	2,182	438
1995	24,520	21,933	2,188	399
1996	24,721	21,803	2,503	415
1997	22,787	19,892	2,502	393
1998	23,057	19,647	3,016	394
1999	25,207	21,611	3,195	401
2000	24,862	21,550	2,965	347
2001	26,817	23,477	3,048	292
2002	27,841	24,292	3,215	334
2003	31,865	28,021	3,328	516

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate she has made of the number of individuals affected by the transitional provisions of the Enterprise Act 2002 that permit a three year grace period from 1 April 2004 in which creditors can pursue the assets of bankrupts. [207758]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The three-year period referred to relates only to interests in a bankrupt's home, not to all assets.

The number of bankrupts or former bankrupts whose cases remained with the Official Receiver as trustee as at 1 April 2004 and involved an interest in bankrupt's home was approximately 6,500. However, at that time there would also have been cases of this type in which insolvency practitioners had been appointed as trustee. Several such appointments would have dated back some considerable time and it is not possible to estimate how many such cases there might have been.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many individuals with assets on the realisation register of the Official Receiver were pursued for their assets in each year since 1990. [207753]

Mr. Sutcliffe: There is no overall realisation register as such kept by the Official Receiver, as details are recorded against each individual case.

However, there is a register of "protracted realisations", i.e. assets owned by insolvents which cannot be realised immediately or within a short period after the making of a bankruptcy or winding-up order. The vast majority of assets which are put on to this register are interests in bankrupts' home and pension policies.

Prior to 1999 protracted realisations registers were kept by individual Official Receivers. In 1999 those registers were amalgamated into one register, which was then maintained by a newly set-up unit, the Protracted Realisations Unit. At that stage there were 33,139 entries on the amalgamated register.

While it is not possible to be precise, the vast majority of register entries at that time would have been made from 1990 onwards. Since 1999 a further 14,820 entries have been made on the register held by the Protracted Realisations Unit.

It is not possible from the records held to break the entries down into individual years of entry.

Very few realisations were made in the years between 1990 and 1999 of assets on the protracted realisations registers held by Official Receivers. The purpose of setting up the Protracted Realisations Unit was to allow the Insolvency Service to take a proactive approach towards dealing with those assets. In many instances this has involved the appointment of an insolvency practitioner as trustee to carry out the realisation. Since 1999 the number of cases passed to insolvency practitioners for realisation or dealt with by the Protracted Realisations Unit itself is 30,812.

It is not possible to give realisation details for individual years from 1990 or to say in each year how many individuals were involved.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many individuals had assets placed on the realisation register of the Official Receiver in each year since 1990. [207754]

Mr. Sutcliffe: There is no overall realisation register as such kept by the Official Receiver, as details are recorded against each individual case.

However, there is a register of "protracted realisations", i.e. assets owned by insolvents which cannot be realised immediately or within a short period after the making of a bankruptcy or winding-up order. The vast majority of assets which are put on to this register are interests in bankrupts' home and pension policies.

Prior to 1999 protracted realisations registers were kept by individual Official Receivers. In 1999 those registers were amalgamated into one register, which was then maintained by a newly set-up unit, the Protracted Realisations Unit. At that stage there were 33,139 entries on the amalgamated register.

While it is not possible to be precise, the vast majority of register entries at that time would have been made from 1990 onwards. Since 1999 a further 14,820 entries have been made on the register held by the Protracted Realisations Unit.

It is not possible from the records held to break the entries down into individual years of entry.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what percentage of the total number of entries on the realisation register of the Official Receiver have been realised in each year since 1990. [207756]

Mr. Sutcliffe: There is no overall realisation register as such kept by the Official Receiver, as details are recorded against each individual case.

However, there is a register of "protracted realisations", ie assets owned by insolvents which cannot be realised immediately or within a short period after the making of a bankruptcy or winding-up order. The vast majority of assets which are put on to this register are interests in bankrupts' home and pension policies.

Prior to 1999 protracted realisations registers were kept by individual Official Receivers. In 1999 those registers were amalgamated into one register, which was then maintained by a newly set-up unit, the Protracted Realisations Unit. At that stage there were 33,139 entries on the amalgamated register.

While it is not possible to be precise, the vast majority of register entries at that time would have been made from 1990 onwards. Since 1999 a further 14,820 entries have been made on the register held by the Protracted Realisations Unit.

It is not possible from the records held to break the entries down into individual years of entry.

Very few realisations were made in the years between 1990 and 1999 of assets on the protracted realisations registers held by Official Receivers. The purpose of setting up the Protracted Realisations Unit was to allow the Insolvency Service to take a proactive approach towards dealing with those assets. In many instances this has involved the appointment of an insolvency practitioner as trustee to carry out the realisation. Since 1999 the number of cases passed to insolvency practitioners for realisation or dealt with by the Protracted Realisations Unit itself is 30,812.

It is not possible to give realisation details for individual years from 1990.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what income the Official Receiver has received in each year since 1990 from the realisation of assets on the realisation register. [207757]

Mr. Sutcliffe: There is no overall realisation register as such kept by the Official Receiver, as details are recorded against each individual case.

However, there is a register of "protracted realisations", ie assets owned by insolvents which cannot be realised immediately or within a short period after the making of a bankruptcy or winding-up order. The vast majority of assets which are put on to this register are interests in bankrupts' home and pension policies.

Prior to 1999 protracted realisations registers were kept by individual Official Receivers. In 1999 those registers were amalgamated into one register, which was then maintained by a newly set-up unit, the Protracted Realisations Unit. At that stage there were 33,139 entries on the amalgamated register.

While it is not possible to be precise, the vast majority of register entries at that time would have been made from 1990 onwards. Since 1999 a further 14,320 entries have been made on the register held by the Protracted Realisations Unit.

It is not possible from the records held to break the entries down into individual years of entry.

Very few realisations were made in the years between 1990 and 1999 of assets on the protracted realisations registers held by Official Receivers. The purpose of setting up the Protracted Realisations Unit was to allow the Insolvency Service to take a proactive approach towards dealing with those assets. In many instances this has involved the appointment of an insolvency practitioner as trustee to carry out the realisation. Since 1999 the number of cases passed to insolvency practitioners for realisation or dealt with by the Protracted Realisations Unit itself is 30,812.

It is not possible to give realisation details for individual years from 1990 or to give the amounts of actual realisations, especially as many of these will have been made by insolvency practitioners rather than by the Official Receiver.

Business Support Initiatives

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to the Answer of 7 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 465W, on Business Support Initiatives, how much financial assistance has been provided to companies through the *(a)* Passport to Export, *(b)* Support for Exhibitions and Seminars Abroad and *(c)* Export Marketing Research Scheme products in each year since 2001–02; and what provision has been made for 2005–06. [206918]

Mr. Alexander: Assistance has been provided at the following levels:

£ million

	Passport	*SESA*	*EMRS*
2001–02	3.98	20	0.68
2002–03	4.4	19.5	0.61
2003–04	4.5	20	0.62
The forecast level of assistance in 2004–05 is:			
2004–05	5.5	20	0.70
The provision for 2005–06 is:			
2005–06	6.2	16	0.70

Clergy (Employment Legislation)

Mark Tami: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if the Government will take further steps to ensure that clergy are fully protected in respect of *(a)* race, *(b)* disability and *(c)* sex discrimination in relation to employment legislation. [205379]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Most clergy are office holders rather than employees, so discrimination against them in the course of their work did not generally fall within the scope of the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, Race Relations Act 1976 or Disability Discrimination Act 1995 as originally drafted.

In 2003, office holders were brought within the scope of the Race Relations Act, while in 2004, new provisions brought office holders within the scope of the Disability Discrimination Act. The Government proposes to bring office holders into the scope of the Sex Discrimination Act during 2005.

By extending the scope of anti-discrimination legislation to cover office holders, the Government are ensuring that members of the clergy are protected by such legislation.

Mark Tami: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment has been made of the impact of the Genuine Occupation Qualification within the *(a)* Sex Discrimination Act 1975, *(b)* Race Relations Act 1976 and *(c)* Disability Discrimination Act 1995 on clergy office holders. [205380]

Mr. Sutcliffe: No assessment has been made as regards the Race Relations Act 1976 and no such qualification exists in the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. As regards the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, some research has been undertaken into the impact of the section 19 exception for the purposes of employment etc by organised religions and has found no instances of S19 being relied upon in the courts or tribunals. We intend to clarify the position further in the process of consulting on the extension of the Sex Discrimination Act to office holders later this year, as Government implements the Equal Treatment (Amendment) Directive.

EU Competition

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on the effect of European Court of Justice Case C-247/02, reference OJ C300 vol 47 of 4 December, on her Department's efforts to increase cross-EU competition in the awarding of public sector contracts by EU member states. [207103]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The judgement in the European Court of Justice Case C-247/02, reference OJ C300 vol. 47 of 4 December, confirms that award options for public sector contracts by EU member states of either accepting the lowest price or the most economically advantageous tender, provided by the EU procurement Directives, should not be overridden by national rules. In this particular case the judgement concluded that it was not permitted to have a national rule that imposed lowest price as the only award criteria for public contracts as this could have a negative impact on competition. The correct implementation of the EU Directives on public procurement is important as it facilitates fair and transparent competition across the EU.

Exeter University

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the impact of the proposed closure by Exeter University of its undergraduate chemistry provision on the Government's 10-Year Investment Framework for Science and Innovation. [202637]

Ms Hewitt: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave him on 14 December 2004, *Official Report,* columns 1053–54W.

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions she has had with ministerial colleagues in the Treasury about the proposed closure by Exeter University of its undergraduate chemistry provision. [202641]

Ms Hewitt: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave him on 14 December 2004, *Official Report,* columns 1053–54W.

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether her Department was informed by Exeter University about the proposed closure of its undergraduate chemistry provision. [202697]

Ms Hewitt: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave him on 14 December 2004, *Official Report,* columns 1053–54W.

Improvement Investment Grants

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what timetable has been established to draw down the outstanding balance in respect of improvement investment grants to Post Office Ltd. [207602]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Operation of the urban reinvention programme, including consideration of applications from sub postmasters for investment grant funding, is a matter for Post Office Ltd. The Department has not imposed a timetable for the use of this funding. It was always anticipated that there would be some time lag between closure decisions being announced and take up of investment grant funding. Post Office Ltd is seeing take up increase and expects further increases as the restructuring of the network continues and sub postmasters become more confident about their future prospects. Post Office Ltd has devoted additional resources to establish a separate team dedicated to promoting and supervising the implementation of investment required to upgrade remaining offices and fully expects to utilise the £30 million available.

Investment (Bedford/Kempston)

Mr. Patrick Hall: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps she is taking to encourage greater inward investment in Bedford and Kempston. [207224]

Mr. Alexander: UK Trade and Investment is expanding its inward investment operation and will make further resources available to Invest East of England, which is the inward investment promotion agency for the East of England.

Miners' Compensation

Mr. Clapham: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what proportion of claims by former miners claiming compensation for work-related illness and their families were fraudulent; and what proportion were *(a)* live and *(b)* posthumous claims. [206712]

Nigel Griffiths *[holding answer 21 December 2004]:* The two coal schemes have inherent internal controls to validate claims: the medical assessment processes for COPD (around 10 per cent. of claims are denied on this basis) and occupational history for VWF (around 20 per cent. of claims are denied on this basis).

With specific reference to "fraud" as against possible exaggeration. Fraud controls additional to this have resulted in around 1,500 suspicious claims being referred to the fraud team with Capita, our claims handler, for further investigation. This is 0.2 per cent. of the 750,000 claims made in total across both schemes. Of these cases referred, one-third have been denied or reduced.

In addition, one claim was successfully prosecuted, resulting in a custodial sentence, and a further eight cases are being considered for referral to the Police.

For COPD cases, over 300 deceased cases have been referred for investigation (0.1 per cent. of the total claims made) and over 150 live cases have been referred (0.06 per cent. of the total claims made). We are unable to provide a similar breakdown for VWF claims.

Mr. Clapham: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what procedure is used by her Department when an allegation of fraud is made by the insurers against a former miner claiming damages for work-related illness or his family; and whether the procedure has been agreed with the claimants' group of solicitors. [206713]

Nigel Griffiths *[holding answer 21 December 2004]:* Suspicious claims are referred to the fraud team within Capita, our claims handler. If they warrant further investigation we will ask to interview the claimant (and helper for VWF Services claims). If an interview is requested the solicitor will be advised, giving an outline of the issues involved and invited to attend.

We have not agreed the procedures with the claimant's group of solicitors because of the risk of fraud becoming harder to detect and prejudicing the possibility of being able to conduct a proper investigation.

Post Office (Rural Subsidy)

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the total cost to the Department of the rural subsidy to the Post Office was in the last year for which figures are available; and how the rural subsidy to the Post Office is organised. [207306]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Government are making available a total of £750 million to maintain the rural network up to 2008. From 2003–04 to 2005–06 up to £450 million is available, made up of £198 million to underpin assigned office payments to sub postmasters, £227 million to meet the costs of supporting the rural network infrastructure (eg IT, cash delivery, help lines) and £25 million to fund pilot work to test new ways of delivering services. From 2006–07 to 2007–08 up to £300 million will be available, subject to state aid clearance. The detailed allocation of this is not yet finalised.

Post Office Card Accounts

Brian Cotter: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry who is responsible for the operation of the Post Office Card Account helpline. [207250]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The operation of the Post Office card account is a commercial matter that falls within the day-to-day responsibility of Post Office Ltd.

Brian Cotter: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many complaints have been received on the operation of Post Office Card Accounts since their introduction. [207251]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Department of Trade and Industry has no role in the operation of the Post Office card account, which is a commercial matter that falls within the day-to-day responsibility of Post Office Ltd. I have therefore asked the Chief Executive to reply direct to the hon. Member.

Post Offices

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what proportion of the urban population lived within one mile of a post office or sub-post office in *(a)* Scotland, *(b)* England, *(c)* Wales, *(d)* the UK and *(e)* each constituency (i) in 1997 and (ii) at the most recent date for which information is available. [207605]

Mr. Sutcliffe: This is an operational matter for Post Office Ltd. And I have asked the Chief Executive to reply direct to the hon. Member.

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many post offices in *(a)* Scotland, *(b)* England, *(c)* Wales and *(d)* each constituency were recommended for closure under the Urban Reinvention Programme; how many were (i) opposed by and (ii) approved by Postwatch; how many (A) closed and (B) remained open after public consultation; and how many were saved from closure on appeal by Postwatch. [207606]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Decisions on post office closures are a matter for Post Office Ltd. and I have asked the Chief Executive to reply direct to the hon. Member.

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many post offices in *(a)* Scotland, *(b)* England, *(c)* Wales and *(d)* the UK have received payments under the Urban Investment Programme; and what the average payment has been to each post office. [207603]

Mr. Sutcliffe: This is an operational matter for Post Office Ltd. and I have asked the Chief Executive to reply direct to the hon. Member.

Public Bodies

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many people are employed by the *(a)* Copyright Tribunal, *(b)* Employment Appeal Tribunal, *(c)* Insolvency Practitioners Tribunal, *(d)* persons hearing consumer credit licensing appeals, *(e)* persons hearing estate agents appeals and *(f)* employment tribunals; what the running cost of each body was in the last year for which figures are available; and if she will make a statement on the future of each body. [203747]

Mr. Sutcliffe: None of these bodies employ staff. Support/secretariat services for each body are provided as follows:

Body	*Support/secretariat services*
Copyright Tribunal	The Patent Office
Insolvency Practitioners Tribunal	The Insolvency Service
Persons hearing consumer credit licensing appeals	DTI
Persons hearing estate agents appeals	DTI
Employment Tribunals	Employment Tribunals Service
Employment Appeals Tribunal	Employment Tribunals Service

The running costs of the Copyright Tribunal and Insolvency Practitioners Tribunal are not separately identifiable in the Patent Office or Insolvency Service accounts.

The 2003–04 running costs for the persons hearing consumer credit licensing appeals and persons hearing estate agents appeals were £87,000 and £43,000 respectively.

The running costs of The Employment Tribunals Service are contained in their Annual Report and Accounts for 2003–04. These were announced to Parliament, deposited in the House Libraries and e-published at www.ets.gov.uk in July 2004.

All the listed bodies are kept under review, in accordance with Government guidelines, to ensure that its functions are still required and that these bodies still provide the most effective means of carrying out those functions.

Under plans set out in the White Paper "Transforming Public Services: Complaints, Redress and Tribunals", published in July 2004, The Employment Tribunals, Employment Appeal Tribunal, The Persons hearing consumer credit licensing appeals, Persons hearing estate agents appeals will be transferred to the Tribunal Service under the auspices of the Department for Constitutional Affairs. The Employment Tribunals and Employment Appeal Tribunal are expected to transfer on 1 April 2006. The Persons hearing consumer credit licensing appeals and the Persons hearing estate agents appeals will transfer in due course.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many people are employed by *(a)* the Agriculture and Environment Biotechnology Commission, *(b)* the Information Age Partnership, *(c)* the Low Pay Commission, *(d)* the Small Business Investment Taskforce and *(e)* the Women's National Commission; what the running cost of each body was in the last year for which figures are available; and if she will make a statement on the future of each body. [203749]

Mr. Sutcliffe: None of these bodies employ staff. Support/secretariat services for each body are provided by DTI.

The running costs of these bodies form part of DTFs overall expenditure. Expenditure on DTI sponsorship are listed in the following table.

Running costs during 2003–04

	£000
Agriculture and Environment Biotechnology Commission	[illegible]21,918
Low Pay Commission	[illegible]58,141
Small Business Investment Taskforce	60,000
Women's National Commission	3[illegible]2,270.
Information Age Partnership	[1]—

[1] The running costs of the Information Age Partnership are not separately identifiable in DTFs Accounts.

All the listed bodies are kept under review, in accordance with Government guidelines, to ensure that its functions are still required and that these bodies still provide the most effective means of carrying out those functions.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many people are employed by *(a)* the Coal Authority, *(b)* the Competition Commission, *(c)* Postwatch, *(d)* the Equal Opportunities Commission, *(e)* Energywatch, *(f)* the National Consumer Council, *(g)* the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority and *(h)* the Simpler Trade Procedures Organisation; what the running cost of each body was in the last year for which figures are available; and if she will make a statement on the future of each body. [203753]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The answer is listed in the following tables:

Running costs during 2003–04

	£ million
Coal Authority	43.9
Competition Commission	18.3
Postwatch	10.3
Equal Opportunities Commission	8.7
Energywatch	13.1
National Consumer Council	4
United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authoirty	414.9
Simpler Trade Procedures Organisation	1.3

Staffing during 2003–04

	Number
Coal Authority	140
Competition Commission	168
Postwatch	121
Equal Opportunities Commission	153
Energywatch	287
National Consumer Council	66.6
United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authoirty	2,841
Simpler Trade Procedures Organisation	11

All the listed bodies are kept under review, in accordance with Government guidelines, to ensure that their functions are still required and that they still provide the most effective means of carrying out those functions.

The UKAEA's responsibilities for nuclear liabilities will change from 1 April 2005 as a result of the Energy Act 2004.

Proposals that the Equal Opportunities Commission form part of the planned a single equality body were announced in The White Paper "Fairness for All: A New Commission for Equality and Human Rights" launched in May 2004.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the membership is of the *(a)* Spectrum Management Advisory Group, *(b)* British Hallmarking Council and *(c)* Design Council; what the (i) cost of salaries and expenses to members and (ii) running costs was of each body in the last year for which figures are available; and how many staff are employed to service each body. [203758]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Spectrum Management Advisory Body was wound up on 31 December 2003. Its functions are now carried out by Ofcom.

The British Hallmarking Council has nineteen members; with the exception of the Chairman all are unpaid but entitled to claim expenses. Emoluments to the Chairman Year ending 2003 were £12,000. No other staff were employed during this period. Its running costs during the year ending 31 December 2003 were £35,637.

The members are:

Chairman

Tom Murray

Members

Linda Campbell OBE

Mike Drewry

Martyn Pugh

Stefan Waclawski

Fod Barnes

Dr. Peter Clapham
Adam Green
Peter Atkinson
John Evans
Zoe Simpson
Robin Buchanon-Dunlop CBE
Richard Vanderpump
Simon Batiste
Roger Burman
Kay Alexander
Professor Dorothy Hogg

Expenses paid to members during 2003 totalled £3,946.

The Design Council has 17 members; all are unpaid but entitled to claim expenses.

The Chairman:

Sir William Stubbs

The members are:

Hamish Bryce
John Crathorne MBE
Dr. Peter Davies CBE
Penny Egan
George Cox
Lord Freyberg
John Hazelwood CBE
Richard Seymour
Gary Lockton
Roger Lyons
Alastair Macdonald CB
Dorothy MacKenzie
Jonathan Sands

Expenses paid to members in 2003–04 totalled £2,000.

The running costs for the financial year 2003–04 was £7,624.00. 66 staff were employed during this period.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the membership is of the *(a)* Fuel Poverty Advisory Group, *(b)* Fuel Poverty Monitoring and Technical Group, *(c)* Industrial Development Advisory Board, *(d)* Intellectual Property Advisory Committee, *(e)* Investment Committee, *(f)* Measurement Advisory Committee, *(g)* Motorsport Competitiveness Panel, *(h)* National Policy Forum for Start-Ups, *(i)* regional industrial development boards, *(j)* Renewables Advisory Board, *(k)* Sector Analysis Strategy Committee and *(l)* Small Business Council; what the (i) cost of salaries and expenses to members and (ii) running cost of each body was in the last year for which figures are available; and how many staff are employed to service each body. [203807]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Membership of existing bodies is listed. The Fuel Poverty Advisory Group is a group whose membership consists an appointed chairman and persons nominated by the representative bodies listed. The Sector Analysis Strategy Committee is an internal management committee consisting of DTI and Treasury officials and one representative from both the CBI and TUC. The running costs of these bodies form part of DTI's overall expenditure. None of the bodies employ staff. DTI staff service these bodies alongside a range of other duties but it is not possible to identify their numbers separately.

Expenditure on DTI sponsorship during 2003–04 was:

	£
Fuel Poverty Advisory Group	20,000
Industrial Development Advisory Board	38,000
Intellectual Property Advisory Committee	67,262
Regional Industrial Development Boards	107,640
Measurement Advisory Committee	66,000
Renewables Advisory Board	21,500
Small Business Council	465,200

Other costs are not separately identifiable in DTI's accounts.

The Motorsport Competitiveness Panel has closed.

Members of the Fuel Poverty Advisory Group, Fuel Poverty Monitoring and Technical Group, Industrial Development Advisory Board, Measurement Advisory Committee, National Policy Forum for Start-Ups, regional industrial development boards, Renewables Advisory Board and Sector Analysis Strategy Committee are unpaid but entitled to claim expenses. Expenses claimed are not separately identifiable in DTI's accounts.

Members of the Investment Committee and Small Business Council are paid £4,800 per annum and expenses. Expenses are not separately identifiable in DTI's accounts.

Members of the Intellectual Property Advisory Committee receive an allowance of £135 for each day on which they attend meetings. The chair receives £1,500 per annum. All members are entitled to claim expenses. Expenses claimed are not separately identifiable in DTI's accounts.

Fuel Poverty Advisory Group

Peter Lehmann (Chair)
Association for the Conservation of Energy
Centrica
EAGA Partnership Ltd.
Energy Efficiency Partnership for Homes
Energywatch
Help the Aged
Innogy
Local Government Association
National Energy Action
National Heart Forum
Powergen
Presentation Housing Association
Public Utilities Access Forum
Transco
Citizens Advice
EDF Energy

Fuel Poverty Monitoring and Technical Group

William Baker
Dave Barnes
Dr. Marilyn Booth
John Crouch
Lesley Davies

Julie Dunster
Maxine Frerk
Gretel Jones
Phil Kear
Diana Lowe
Peter Matejic
Diane Millen
John Riley
Sara Rusling
Henry Small
Elaine Waterson
Daphne White
Graham White
Pam Wynne

Industrial Development Advisory Board

Peter Allen
Michael Beverley
Victor Blank
Bridget Blow
Brian Morrison Count
Rosalind Hedley-Miller
Karen Elisabeth Jones
Gordon Page
Swraj Paul
Iain Samuel Robertson
Robert Swannell
Juliet Susan Durrant Williams

Intellectual Property Advisory Committee

Richard Gallafent
Mandy Haberman
Ian Harvey
Roland Hill
Paul Johnston
Hector MacQueen
Hilary Newiss
David Perkins
Tim Roberts
Sandy Thomas
David Vaver

Investment Committee

Jim Brathwaite
Richard Maudslay
Caroline Whitfield
Fields Wicker-Miurin

Measurement Advisory Committee

Penny Allisy-Roberts
Peter Bleasdale
Michael Buckley
Peter Cowley
Les Ebdon
David Ellix
Richard Freeman
Colin Gaskell
Ken Grattan
David Holmwood
Alan Johnson
Roger Jones
John Latham
Steve Lower
Janet Townsend
John Tyrer

National Policy Forum for Start-Ups

Janet Beecher
Jeff Cooke
Greg Chammings
Jeremy Crook
Valerie Culley
Joy Danby
George Derbyshire
Mark Ferrero
Philip Graham
Lynda Grange
Julie Hitchcock
Pula Houghton
Victoria Jonson
Helen King
Clive Lewis
Kirstin Liddell
Brian McCarthy
Dennis Pattinson
Emmeline Owens
Stephen Pegge
Tony Robinson
Mei Shui
Kevin Steele
Malcolm C Taylor
Alice Teague
Erica Watson

Regional Industrial Development Boards

Eastern Region Industrial Development Board
David Richard Baggott
Alan Davies
Robert Downing
Sian Fytche
Martin James Gould
Keith Hamilton
Terence Ralph Hill
Fiona Hoskins
Geoff Lambert
Hugh Lawson
Marilyn Martin
Laurence John Russen
Mike Smith

London and South East Regional Industrial Development Board

Thomas William Cohen
Peter Edwin Croucher
Praful Davda
Bryan Davies
Gill Gurbrinder
Jim Hicks
Wendy Hyde
Shahzad Khan
Mei Sim Lai
John McCready
Helen Sasson
Inder Jeet Sodhi
Robert Stiles
Graeme Wyles

North West Industrial Development Board

Lorraine Clinton
Duncan McLellan
Raymond Charles McManus
William Joseph Mullarkey
Kirit Pathak
Ruth Isabel Port
David John Tunnicliff
George Verghese
Eva Wisemark
Marcus Wood

North East Industrial Development Board

Lucy Armstrong
Paul Donald Bartlett
Subhash Chaudhary
Christopher Gill
William Graham
Haani Ul Hasnain
Carol Ann Hunter
Dorothy Marshall
Lorna Moran
Anne Reece
Simon Still
Rod Taylor
Kathryn Lucy Winskell

South West Industrial Development Board

Sue Astbury
Ruth Bagley
Alan Peter Courts
John Crownshaw,
Ian Robert Douglas
Gibson, Neville
Hayman, Alan Neil
Denise Major
Richard Morgan
Rama Warren Nand-Lal
Victoria Pickering
Nigel Randall
Brian Sherwin
Terence Alan Slater
Barbara Spiers

Yorkshire/Humberside and East Midlands Industrial Development Board

Neil Graham Adnitt
Andrew Peter Bradley
Christine Margaret Dunn
David Arthur Garside
James Alexander (Sandy) Gillan
Zulfiqar Hussain
Lumby,Gary
Nigel Pritchard
Terry George Richardson
Michael Alan Sharp
Edward Smith
Mogg Stanners

West Midlands Industrial Development Board

Mark Day
Lynne Marlane Evans
David Grove
Royston Jones
David Lovatt
Andrew Richard Manning-Cox
Howard Marshall
Peter Michael Matthews
Paramjit Paul Singh
Michael John Smith
David John Waller
Michael Wilson

Renewables Advisory Board

Tariq Ali
Doug Coleman
Tom Delay
Robert Hastings
Gearoid Lane
Robert Leicester
Jeremy Leggett
Wilson Malone
Alan Moore
Chris Morris
Ray Noble
Simon Roberts
David Still
Patricia Thornley
Dale Vince
David James Williams
David John Williams
Jason Scagell

Small Business Council

William Sargent (Chair)
Simon Bartley
Sue Brownson
Grant Burton
Elsa Caleb
Peter Donaldson
Lorraine Gradwell
Teresa Graham
Paul Harrod
Caroline Hughes
Andrew Ive
Scott Johnson
John McLaren-Stewart
Ilyas Patel
Sally Preston
Fiona Price
Dr. John Reynolds
Prof. Monder Ram
Michael Robinson
Louise Shafar
Sean Taggart
Simon Topman
Jan Ward
Candida Whitmill

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the membership is of the *(a)* Advisory Committee on Cleaner Coal Technology, *(b)* Advisory Group on Basic Technologies Programme, *(c)* Aerospace Committee, *(d)* Age Advisory Group, *(e)* Better Payment Practice Group, *(f)* Broadband Stakeholder Group, *(g)* Business Incubtion Fund Investment Panel, *(h)* Council for Science and Technology, (i) Database Market Strategy Group, *(j)* Distributed Generation Co-ordinating Group, *(k)* Employment Tribunal Implementation Group, *(l)* Energy Advisory Panel, *(m)* Ethnic Minority Business Forum and *(n)* Fuel Cells Advisory Panel; what the (i) cost of salaries and expenses to members and (ii) running cost of each body was in the last year for which figures are available; and how many staff are employed to service each body. [203808]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The membership of the Age Advisory Group, Council for Science and Technology, Employment Tribunal Implementation Group, Business Incubation Fund Investment Panel and Ethnic Minority Business Forum are listed. The Better Payment Practice Group is a group whose membership consists of persons nominated by the representative bodies listed. The Broadband Stakeholder Group is a focus group with unpaid open membership. Ethnic Minority Business Forum members receive a fee of £4,800 per annum and expenses. Members of all other bodies are unpaid but may claim expenses. None of these bodies employ staff. DTI staff provides secretariat/support services for each body along side a range of other duties. It is not possible to identify their numbers separately.

The expenditure on sponsorship for each body form part of DTI's overall budget. In 2003–04 the cost of the Council for Science and Technology and Ethnic Minority Business Forum were £141,000 and £14,640 respectively. Other costs are not separately identifiable in DTI's accounts.

The following bodies have closed:

Advisory Committee on Cleaner Coal Technology
Advisory Group on Basic Technologies Programme
Aerospace Committee
Database Market Strategy Group
Distributed Generation Co-ordinating Group
Energy Advisory Panel
Fuel Cells Advisory Panel

Current Membership of extisting bodies

Age Advisory Group

Lucy Anderson
Carolynne Arfield
Neil Bentley
Patrick Grattan
Keith Handley
Andrew Harrop
Ewa Hibbert
Anne Kensall
Sam Mercer
Mike Palmer
Steve Smith
Robert Taylor
Dianah Worman

The Better Payment Practice Group

The Association of British Insurers
Association of Chartered and Certified Accountants
The British Bankers' Association
The British Chambers of Commerce
The Chartered Institute of
Management Accountants
Confederation of British Industry
Credit Management Research Centre
The Credit Services Association.
The Factors & Discounters Association
The Federation of Small Business
The Forum of Private Business.
The Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales
The Institute of Credit Management
Institute of Directors
The Institute of Export
The Small Business Service

Business Incubation Fund Investment Panel

Paul Bradstock
Malcolm Buckler
Alan Fletcher
Kamaljeet Kundi
Patrick Umeh

Council for Science and Technology

Professor Sir John Beringer
Professor Geoffrey Boulton
Professor Janet Finch
Andrew Gould
Professor Wendy Hall
Dr. Hermann Hauser
Dr. Dieter Helm
Professor Alan Hughes
Dr. Sue Ion
Sir David King
Dr. Robert Margetts
Sir Paul Nurse
Sir Keith Peters
Dr. Raj Rajagopal
Professor Michael Sterling
Professor Kathy Sykes
Dr. Mark Walport

Ethnic Minority Business Fourm Members

Numan Azmi
Gwen Balson
Tina Fahm
Leslie Fairclough
Yvonne Field
Peaches Golding
Dr. Haider Imam
Mohammed Isap
Mei Sim Lai
Adeeba Malik
Professor Monder Ram

Tony Sealey

Askar Sheibani

Rahid Teladia

Employment Tribunal Implementation Group

Sarah Anderson

John Cridland

Rita Donaghy

Alan Jones

His Honour Judge Meeran, President of the Employment Tribunals (England and Wales)

Colin Milne, President of the Employment Tribunals (Scotland)

Frances O'Grady

Regional Venture Capital Fund

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many enterprises which received funding from the Regional Venture Capital Fund programme have failed since receiving that funding. [206133]

Nigel Griffiths: Of the 148 businesses invested in by RVCFs one has failed (as at 30 November 2004).

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the administration costs of the Regional Venture Capital Fund have been in each year since its inception, broken down by region. [206135]

Nigel Griffiths: The nine funds have a total value of £250.5 million, with the DTI/SBS commitment being £74,375,000. To 30 November 2004 the DTI/SBS has invested almost £46 million in the nine RVCFs.

Following is a table setting out the estimated administration costs of the Regional Venture Capital Fund since its inception.

Financial year	*Administration costs*
1999–2000	47,020
2000–01	92,167
2001–02	95,853
2002–03	84,455
2003–04	75,117
2004–05	56,586
Total	451,198

Sub-post Offices (Derbyshire)

Mr. McLoughlin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many sub-post offices were closed in *(a)* the West Derbyshire constituency and *(b)* Derbyshire in each of the last five years. [207461]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Decisions on post office closures are a matter for Post Office Ltd. and I have asked the Chief Executive to reply direct to the hon. Member.

Sub-postmasters (Compensation)

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the average compensation payment has been to sub-postmasters leaving the postal services business in *(a)* each constituency and *(b)* each nation and region of the UK under the Urban Reinvention Programme. [207604]

Mr. Sutcliffe: This is an operational matter for Post Office Ltd. And I have asked the Chief Executive to reply direct to Hon. Member.

UK Trade and Investment

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what agreements UK Trade and Investment has reached with each of the regional development agencies covering roles, resources and outputs on international trade. [206915]

Mr. Alexander: Agreements that UKTI will operate as the Regional Development Agencies' international trade arm, covering roles, resources and outputs, have been entered into between UKTI and all the RDAs except East of England Development Agency (with whom UKTI has agreed a joint delivery plan) and Yorkshire Forward (with whom UKTI has agreed a joint working strategy and is in the process of finalising a concordat).

UKTI and the RDAs have recently agreed a national framework for joint working under which, from April 2005, UKTI and all the RDAs will jointly sign off regional delivery plans on international trade These will ensure joint discussion of, and agreement on, objectives, resources, outputs and monitoring/evaluation.

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what *(a)* administration and *(b)* administration capital resources were consumed by her Department in meeting UK Trade and Investment's objectives of (i) enhancing competitiveness of companies in the UK through overseas trade and investment and (ii) ensuring a continuing high level of quality foreign direct investment in 2004–05; and what provision has been made for 2005–06. [206917]

Mr. Alexander: *(a)* The Department of Trade and Industry's administration provision to meet UK Trade and Investment's objectives for the current year (2004–05) amounts to £35.3 million of which some £31 million will be spent on enhancing the competitiveness of companies in the UK through overseas trade and investment and just under £4.3 million on ensuring a continuing high level of quality foreign direct investment. The planned provision for 2005–06 will be some £34 million, of which around 85 per cent. is expected to go on enhancing the competitiveness of companies in the UK through overseas trade and investment and the remainder on ensuring a continuing high level of quality foreign direct investment.

(b) The Department of Trade and Industry's administration provision to meet UK Trade and Investment's objectives does not include any capital resources.

Wind Farm

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when she expects to make a decision on the application submitted in October 2003 by Renewable Energy Systems to build a wind farm in Kedby, North Lincolnshire; and if she will make a statement. [206241]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: It is not yet possible to estimate when the process will conclude and a decision be reached.

TREASURY

Aggregates

David Taylor: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what the changes in levels of *(a)* use and *(b)* sale of (i) recycled and (ii) secondary aggregates has been since the introduction of the Aggregates Levy; [207085]

(2) whether his Department deems the Aggregates Levy to apply to the use of slate waste as aggregate; [207086]

(3) what assessment he has made of the effect of the aggregates levy on *(a)* the production of primary aggregates and *(b)* the volume of such aggregates sold. [207338]

John Healey: Sales data from aggregates levy returns are not recorded in such a way as to enable differentiation between sales or production of primary and secondary aggregates. However, data from the British Geological Survey suggest that overall production of aggregate in the UK decreased by over 8 per cent. between 2001 and 2003 to its lowest level since 1982.

As announced in the recent pre-Budget report, the Symonds Group survey of arisings and use of construction, demolition and excavation waste as aggregate in England in 2003 (published October 2004) shows that production of recycled aggregate increased by over 3 million tonnes between 2001 and 2003.

All slate is exempt from the aggregates levy.

Benefit Claimants (Dagenham)

Jon Cruddas: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many *(a)* unemployed claimants and *(b)* long-term unemployed claimants there have been in the Dagenham constituency in each year since 1997. [207162]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Mr. Jon Cruddas, dated 11 January 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about unemployed claimants in Dagenham. I am replying in his absence. (207162)

The attached table gives the total number of all Jobseeker's Allowance (ISA) claimants resident in the Dagenham Parliamentary Constituency for each year from 1997 to 2004. It also shows those claiming for over 12 months.

JSA claimants resident in the Dagenham constituency—annual averages

	All claimants	*of which: claiming for over 12 months*[1]
1997	2,226	855
1998	1,824	430
1999	1,715	490
2000	1,572	440
2001	1,404	320
2002	1,438	235
2003	1,596	250
2004[2]	1,754	270

[1] Computerised claims only, rounded to the nearest 5.

[2] Average over 11 months.

Source:

Jobcentre Plus administrative system

Communities Staff (Pensions)

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer which Council Decision *(a)* supports and *(b)* authorises the accounting entry for Long Term Pensions Liabilities of Communities Staff (C294 volume 47, 30th November, p.65). [207102]

Mr. Timms: The Financial Regulation (Council Regulation 1605/2002) requires the Commission to keep accounting records. The Staff Regulation (Council Regulation 723/2004 amending the Staff Regulation) governs the funding of the pension scheme for civil servants of the European institutions. Both these regulations were approved by all member states and the European Parliament.

Departmental Costs

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the cost of refurbishments in his Department was in each year since 1997; and what the planned expenditure is for 2005–06. [205679]

Mr. Timms: I refer the hon. Member to the answers I gave to the hon. Member for Buckingham (Mr. Bercow) on 15 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 950W, and 6 February 2002, *Official Report*, column 954W.

Departmental Files

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what changes have been promulgated in each of the past five years to the guidelines or other criteria for the retention or destruction of departmental files. [203321]

Mr. Timms: None.

Departmental Staff

Keith Vaz: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many of the staff employed by his Department have a declared disability. [205775]

Mr. Timms: The Cabinet Office collects and publishes annually statistical information on the civil service by Department. These include data on the number who have declared a disability.

The latest available information at April 2004 is available in the Library and on the civil service website at the following address:

http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management_information/statistical_information/statistics/publications/xls/disability_apr04_4nov04.xls.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many women there are in senior positions in his Department. [205776]

Mr. Timms: The Cabinet Office collects and publishes annually statistical information on the civil service by Department. These include data on the number of women in senior positions in Departments.

The latest available information at April 2004 is available in the Library and on the civil service website at the following address:

http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management_information/statistical_information/statistics/publications/xls/gender_apr04_4nov04.xls.

Divorce

Mrs. May: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many divorces there were in *(a)* 2001, *(b)* 2002 and *(c)* 2003. [207464]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell to Mrs. Theresa May, dated 11 January 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question concerning the number of divorces taking place in 2001, 2002 and 2003. (HMT Ref 207464). I am replying in his absence.

The number of divorces taking place in each of these years 2001, 2002 and 2003 in the United Kingdom is shown below.

	Number
2001	156,814
2002	160,726
2003	166,737

The term divorce includes both decrees absolute and decrees of nullity.

Documents

Sue Doughty: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what his Department's policy is in relation to the storage of documents and the use of shredders; and whether this policy has been reviewed in the past 12 months. [206759]

Mr. Timms: HM Treasury continues to implement well established policies and procedures for the review and disposal of files in accordance with its administrative needs and the Public Records Act. These policies and procedures have not been changed in the past 12 months.

Dormant Accounts

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what progress he has made in his negotiations with banks and building societies in persuading them to use dormant accounts which cannot be reunited with their owners for the support of good causes. [207272]

Mr. Timms: As stated in the Pre Budget Report (Cm 6408), HM Treasury is holding a series of discussions with the financial services industry to take work on unclaimed assets forward. A report on progress will be made in due course.

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on his negotiations with banks and building societies regarding the identification and return of *(a)* dormant and *(b)* orphan bank accounts; and if he will make a statement. [207273]

Mr. Timms: As stated in the recent pre-Budget report (CM 6408),

> "we believe that it is right in principle that more should be done to reunite assets with their owners and [we] welcome the continued efforts of the British Bankers' Association, the Building Societies' Association and National Savings in trying to do so. Where assets and owners cannot be reunited, the assets should be reinvested in society, as long as the original owners' entitlements to reclaim are preserved. The Government asked the industry to expand the scope of action beyond investment banking into retail banking and the wider financial sector. Following the Budget [we have] held constructive discussions with the industry to take this forward and we will report on progress in due course".

Electronic Devices

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how many electronic devices are owned by the Department, broken down by type; [207682]

(2) how many items of electrical equipment were used by his Department in the last year for which figures are available, broken down by *(a)* cost and *(b)* number of each type of item. [205738]

Mr. Timms: The Treasury owns a wide variety of electronic devices. Items with a value greater than £5,000 are capitalised on acquisition and their values are included in the department's balance sheet in the annual resource accounts. For financial control purposes, certain other items which are a theft risk, such as laptop computers and personal organisers, are recorded by the teams holding the assets, but not capitalised on the balance sheet unless individual values exceed £5,000. There is no central complete record of all electronic devices and one could be assembled only at disproportionate cost.

E-mails

Sue Doughty: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his Department's policy is in relation to the storage and deletion of e-mails; and whether this policy has been reviewed in the past 12 months. [206758]

Mr. Timms: E-mail messages that form part of the official record are saved for as long as business needs require and stored corporately in accordance with departmental record management procedures. This policy has not been reviewed in the last 12 months. Further e-mail guidance is available on the National Archives website at http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/electronicrecords/advice/pdf/managing emails.pdf

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on his Department's policy regarding the retention of e-mails in electronic form *(a)* after and *(b)* up to 1 January 2005; and what instructions have been given regarding the deletion of e-mails prior to 1 January 2005. [206948]

Mr. Timms: E-mail messages that form part of the official record are saved for as long as business needs require and stored corporately in accordance with departmental record management procedures. This applies to e-mails both *(a)* after and *(b)* up to 1 January 2005. No separate instructions have been given for the deletion of e-mails prior to 1 January 2005.

Employment (Dagenham)

Jon Cruddas: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people in each ward of the Dagenham constituency are *(a)* employed and *(b)* unemployed. [207155]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Mr. Jon Cruddas, dated 11 January 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent question asking the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people in each ward of the Dagenham constituency are *(a)* employed and *(b)* unemployed. (207155). I am replying in his absence.

Labour Force Survey estimates for 2004 are not available at ward level. I have therefore provided figures taken from the 2001 Census.

The data is provided is based upon the ward boundaries legally in force on 31 December 2002. These are not always completely coterminous with the parliamentary constituency boundaries which were defined in April 1994. A number of the wards listed below are split between two parliamentary constituencies and therefore the data for whole wards are provided on a 'best fit' basis only. Those wards which straddle parliamentary constituencies have been highlighted, and the total number of people living in Output Areas (OA's) within that ward and within another parliamentary constituency has been provided for information. For the count of that portion of the ward within the Dagenham constituency the user is advised to subtract the counts reported for the collection of OA's outside Dagenham Constituency from the ward total.

All people aged 16–74—Dagenham constituency

		Economically active	
	Area	*Employed*	*Unemployed*
00ABFY	Alibon	3,621	334
00ABGA	Chadwell Heath	3,581	305
00ABGB	Eastbrook	4,556	249
00ABGF	Heath	3,434	350
00ABGJ	Parsloes	3,483	281
	Total people in OA's in Parsloes ward which are not contained within Dagenham PC boundary	79	3
00ABGK	River	4,323	347
	Total people in OA's in River ward which are not contained within Dagenham PC boundary	963	87
00ABGM	Valence	3,436	278
00ABGN	Village	3,897	351
00ABGP	Whalebone	4,455	213

Source:

Table KS09 Census 2001 Key Statistics for Output Areas and Table UV29 on the Census Area Statistics for Output Areas. Both are available in the House of Commons Library

Ethnic Minorities

Keith Vaz: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the extent to which his Department's policies meet the needs of ethnic minorities. [205774]

Mr. Timms: The Treasury published a Race Equality Scheme in May 2002, in accordance with the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. The current Race Equality Scheme is available on the Treasury's public website. My Department is in the process of updating the scheme, in accordance with the provisions of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act and a new scheme will be published by May this year.

EU Funding

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to his answer of 9 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 653W, on EU funding, what the sum total is to date in real terms that has not been signed off by the Court of Auditors, broken down by year; and what the UK percentage share of the total EU budget was for each year. [207112]

Mr. Timms: It is important to note that the failure of any part of the Community Budget to gain a positive Statement of Assurance does not mean that the whole of that part of the budget was mis-spent. Rather, it means that the European Court of Auditors found errors in the sample audited in that year.

The figures for the years 1992 onwards (when the annual Statement of Assurance was introduced), showing the total for each year and the sum total to date, and the UK's percentage share, are as follows:

	Total budget not signed off (£ million)[1]	*Percentage UK contribution*[2] *(Post-abatement)*
1992	40,797	11.91
1993	47,368	11.92
1994	43,903	10.00
1995	51,627	13.64
1996	58,388	11.56
1997	52,055	11.86
1998	51,286	15.24
1999	49,896	13.43
2000	47,952	15.76
2001	46,719	9.59
2002	49,161	13.07
2003	60,854	11.92
Total budget not signed off (1992 to 2003)	600,006	–

[1] Taken from data published in Table 1A of respective European Community Finances White Papers, less administrative expenditure (also less pre-accession aid expenditure in 2002).

Latest White Paper (Cm 6134) (ISBN 0-10-161342-3) was published on 22 April 2004 and the figures for the period 1999 to 2003 have been taken from this.

[2] Calculated from data published in European Commission Reports on the Allocation of EU Operating Expenditure.

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the answer of 13 December 2004, *Official Report,* columns 869–70W, on EU Funding, whether the list of *(a)* recipients, *(b)* awards and *(c)* projects funded under B3 budget lines is publicly available; what auditing takes place of those budget lines; and if he will undertake to deposit in the Library such listings across the B3 range where they are not publicly available. [207285]

Mr. Timms: Some B3 budget lines directly fund named organisations. For the majority of these lines, lists of recipients of funding, awards made and projects supported are not publicly available. Appropriations for each budget line are set out in the annual EC Budget which is deposited in the Library of the House.

The European Court of Auditors (ECA) audits the EC Budget on an annual basis, and the ECA may decide to issue a special report on particular activities—a list of these reports is published at the back of the ECA's latest annual report (which has been deposited). Recipients of EU funding will be subject to the accounting and reporting rules of the member state in which they are based and may be subject to individual audits.

EU Staff (Pensions)

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the UK Government position regarding accounting entry for Long Term Pensions Liabilities of European Union Staff (C294 volume 47, 30th November, page 65); and whether there is an agreement between member states assuming liability for this debt. [207263]

Mr. Timms: Like almost all member states, the EU has a funded pension system for its civil servants. Member states are required under the Treaty to contribute to the Community budget, which includes the part-funding of the pension scheme for civil servants of the European Community institutions. The accounting entry complies with the appropriate accounting standards.

European Commission Building (Abuja)

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the cost was of construction of the new European Commission building in Abuja; what the estimated total value is of real estate of Commission offices outside the EU; what the annual cost is of *(a)* staffing and *(b)* maintaining them; and how many people are employed in each office. [207130]

Mr. Timms: The contract for constructing the new building in Abuja was just under £8.09 million. This was split between Germany, Netherlands, Italy and the Commission who will jointly occupy the building. The Commission part of the building was valued at £1.72 million. The common area was valued at £1.90 million. The contract was made in sterling and details of the tender were published in the supplement to the Official Journal (reference OJ S 237) on 8 December 2001.

The Government support co-location, with EU partners and others, where it offers a value for money solution.

The estimated market value of each building owned by the Commission is presented in the annual EC Budget which is deposited in the parliamentary Library.

Aggregated figures for the staffing and maintenance of the Commission's buildings are included in the general running costs of the Commission, and are also presented in the annual EC Budget. There is no break down by building.

European Community Institutions (Pension Liabilities)

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the levels of unfunded pension liabilities of the European Community institutions. [207129]

Mr. Timms: Like almost all member states, the EU has a funded pension system for its civil servants. The pension scheme for civil servants of the European Community institutions is funded partly by the officials themselves, who contribute to one third of the scheme's financing, with the balance funded by member states from the Community budget. The Government played an active role in the recent negotiations to reform the pension scheme. The reforms agreed by all member states will lead to substantial savings and reduced pension liabilities.

European Court of Justice (Fines)

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the total fines that have been imposed by the European Court of Justice on each member state are since 1974; and how much has been *(a)* collected and *(b)* waived for each. [207132]

Mr. Timms: The power to fine member states was given to the European Court of Justice when the Treaty on European Union came into force (on 1 November 1993). Fines can either be in the form of a lump sum or a penalty payment (Article 228(2) EC).

The ECJ has only imposed fines on two occasions under Article 228(2) EC:

(i) Greece was ordered to pay a penalty payment of EUR 20,000 for each day of delay (from the date of service of the judgment), in implementing the measures necessary to ensure that waste was disposed of without endangering human health and without harming the environment. (Case C-387/97, Commission *v.* Greece).

(ii) The ECJ considered that Spain had not taken the measures necessary to ensure that the quality of inshore bathing water conformed to the Community's standards. It ordered Spain to pay to the Commission a penalty payment of EUR 624,150 per year and per 1 per cent. of bathing areas in Spanish inshore waters which had been found not to conform to the limit values laid down for the year in question (Case C-278/01, Commission *v.* Spain).

The collection of fines is a matter for the Commission and records are not held by the UK Government.

Hourly Gross Earnings

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what proportion of *(a)* male, *(b)* female and *(c)* all full-time workers in (i) Scotland, (ii) each unitary local authority area in Scotland and (iii) Great Britain had hourly gross earnings (A) including and (B) excluding overtime of below (1) £7.58, (2) £5.68 and (3) £4.20 on the latest date for which figures are available. [207577]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Annabelle Ewing, dated 11 January 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking what proportion of *(a)* male, *(b)* female and *(c)* all full-time workers in (i) Scotland, (ii) each local unitary authority area in Scotland and (iii) Great Britain had gross hourly earnings (A) including and (B) excluding overtime of below (1) £7.58, (2) £5.68 and (3) £4.20 on the latest date for which figures are available. I am replying in his absence. (207577)

Average earnings are estimated from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings and are provided for full time employees on adult rates of pay whose pay was unaffected by absence during the pay period, by their place of work. This is the standard definition used for Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings tables. The Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings does not collect data on the self employed and people who do unpaid work.

I am placing in the House of Commons Library, tables showing the counts and proportion of full-time workers for Great Britain, Scotland and Scottish local authorities earning below the stated hourly pay levels.

The Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, carried out in April of each year, is the most comprehensive source of earnings information in the United Kingdom. It is a one per cent sample of all employees who are members of pay-as-you-earn schemes, but because of its sampling frame, it has difficulty capturing data on people with very low pay. It is therefore likely to under-represent relatively low paid staff earning below the tax threshold.

The Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings publication criteria ensures that all estimates are undisclosive. A number of estimates have been removed from the published tables for these reasons.

Iraq

Harry Cohen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what agreement concerning what proportion of debt has been reached in respect of write-off of Iraq's debts for which non-state actors are creditors; and if he will make a statement. [207266]

Mr. Timms: The Paris Club of official creditors agreed on 21 November 2004 to write off 80 per cent. of Iraq's debt. This agreement with Iraq contains a provision that requires Iraq to seek comparable treatment from all non-Paris Club creditors, including private creditors. The Iraqi authorities are responsible for those negotiations.

Harry Cohen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what conditionality is required of Iraq by the International Monetary Fund; whether *(a)* the UK Government and *(b)* other Paris Club Governments are committed to the implementation of this conditionality under the Paris Club debt write-off deal; and if he will make a statement. [207271]

Mr. Timms: Iraq agreed a programme of emergency post-conflict assistance (EPCA) with the IMF on 29 September 2004, and intends to agree an upper credit tranche IMF Arrangement in 2005. The EPCA document is publicly available. The terms of the upper credit tranche arrangement are yet to be negotiated by Iraq and the IMF. The Paris Club agreement on debt reduction for Iraq will be delivered in three tranches, the second and third of which are linked to the IMF Board's approval, and Iraq's implementation, of an upper credit tranche IMF arrangement.

Millennium Development Goals

Tom Brake: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of alternative financing instruments that could be utilised for raising the finance required for meeting the millennium development goals in the event that insufficient funds are committed to the International Finance Facility. [207137]

Mr. Timms: UK official development assistance will increase to £6.4 billion by 2008, reaching 0.47 per cent. of national income. On this timetable, if current rates of growth are maintained the UK will reach the UN target of 0.7 per cent. ODA as a share of GNI by 2013. The UK encourages other countries not yet at this target to set a timetable towards achieving it.

But to meet the millennium development goals an additional $50 billion of aid is needed immediately, and this scale of resources is far beyond what traditional funding can offer today. That is why the UK has put forward its proposal for a new international finance facility.

The UK will continue to look at other means of increasing development aid, and welcomes the recent findings of the Landau Report and the Report on Action against Hunger and Poverty which call for further work to be done on the options for providing the resources needed for fighting poverty in the longer-term, including international taxes, special drawing rights and voluntary mechanisms.

Newspapers/Periodicals

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list the *(a)* newspapers and *(b)* periodicals taken by his Department in each year since 1997; and how much the Department spent on each in each year. [207651]

Mr. Timms: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer given by the then Financial Secretary (Ruth Kelly) to the hon. Member for Buckingham (Mr. Bercow) on 29 January 2002, *Official Report*, column 228W.

Ovarian Cancer

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many incidences of ovarian cancer there have been in the last five years. [207084]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Dr. Ian Gibson, dated 11 January 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent question concerning how many incidences of ovarian cancer there have been in the last five years. I am replying in his absence. (207084)

The latest year for which figures are available is 2001. The number of newly diagnosed cases of ovarian cancer registered in England, for the 5 years 1997–2001 are given in the table below along with the directly age-standardised rates.[1]

Number of newly diagnosed cases and directly age-standardised rates[1] of ovarian[2] cancer in England, 1997–2001

Per 100,000 population

	Number of cases	*Age-standardised rate*
1997	5,617	18.8
1998	5,581	18.7
1999	5,435	17.8
2000	5,400	17.5
2001	5,635	18.1

[1] Age-standardised rates are directly standardised to the European standard population. These control for differences in the age structure of the population so as to present incidence rates on a comparable basis over time.

[2] International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) code C56.

Source:
Office for National Statistics

Press Officers

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many press officers are employed in the Department. [206531]

Mr. Timms: The number of press officer posts in the Treasury has changed very little since 1992 and currently stands at nine.

Special Advisers

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many special advisers there are in the Department, broken down by civil service pay grade. [206501]

Mr. Timms: HM Treasury have four special advisers who are not attached to any civil service pay grade. These figures do not include members of the Council of Economic Advisers.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer on how many occasions between 31 March 2002 and 31 March 2003 his special advisers travelled abroad in an official capacity; what places were visited; and how much each visit cost. [207178]

Mr. Timms: I refer to the answer given by the former Financial Secretary (Ruth Kelly) on 15 September 2003, *Official Report*, column 603W.

Stamp Duty

Mr. Flight: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what projections he made for revenue from stamp duty on *(a)* property and *(b)* share transactions in each of the last five years; and what projections he has made for each of the next three financial years. [206940]

Mr. Timms: Estimates of the revenue from stamp duty on both property and share transactions in each of the last five financial years up to and including 2003–04 are given at

http://www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/stats/stamp duty/
table15_1_september04.pdf

Estimated and projected revenues for total stamp taxes in 2004–05 and 2005–06 are published in table B13 of the pre-Budget 2004 report. The breakdown between duty on land and property (Stamp Duty Land Tax) and share transactions is as follows:

£ billion

	2004–05	*2005–06*
Stamp Duty Land Tax	6.2	6.6
Stamp Taxes on Shares	2.6	3.0

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how many stamp duty land tax applications have been received by the Inland Revenue since 1 August; and how many of those applications have been received from solicitors in *(a)* Scotland, *(b)* Northern Ireland and *(c)* England and Wales; [207082]

(2) how many stamp duty land tax certificates the Inland Revenue has issued since 1 August; and how many of those certificates have been issued to solicitors in *(a)* Scotland, *(b)* Northern Ireland and *(c)* England and Wales. [207083]

Mr. Timms: Estimates of the number of applications for certificates received by the Inland Revenue between 1 August and 30 November, and certificates issued between 1 August and 30 November, are given in the following table. The country in the table relates to the country of transaction as it is not possible to give information by location of solicitor.

Thousand

	Estimated number of:	
Country	*Applications*	*Certificates issued*
England and Wales	636	555
Scotland	62	54
Northern Ireland	20	16

Teenage Pregnancies (Coventry)

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many teenage pregnancies have been recorded in Coventry since 1997. [206976]

Mr. Timms: The information falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Mr. Jim Cunningham, dated 11 January 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking how many teenage pregnancies have been recorded in Coventry since 1997. I am replying in his absence. (206976)

The most recent year for which conception statistics are available is 2002. The figures requested are given in the table below. 'Teenage' is interpreted as the under 18 age group, in line with the target set by the Government Strategy on Teenage Pregnancy.

Number of conceptions to women aged under 18 resident in Coventry, 1997–2002

	Number
1997	364
1998	352
1999	314
2000	374
2001	342
2002 (Provisional figures)	381

Telephone Numbers

Mr. Tyler: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much revenue the Treasury has received from the use of non-geographic 0870 telephone numbers for the period 1 October 2003 to 30 September. [205743]

Mr. Timms: None.

Unemployment (Hertfordshire)

Claire Ward: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the level of unemployment in *(a)* Watford constituency and *(b)* South West Hertfordshire constituency in (i) 1995 and (ii) 2004. [207570]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Ms Claire Ward, dated 11 January 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question about unemployment. I am replying in his absence. (207570)

Table 1 provides the available information requested in the Watford and South West Hertfordshire Parliamentary Constituencies for the twelve-month periods ending February 1997, the earliest period for which information is available, and February 2004, the most recent available period.

These estimates from the Labour Force Survey are, as with any sample survey, subject to sampling variability.

ONS also compiles statistics of those claiming Jobseeker's Allowance for local areas.

Table 2 gives the annual average number of people resident in the Watford and South West Hertfordshire constituencies claiming Jobseeker's Allowance benefits in 1995 and 2004.

Table 1: Unemployed people resident in the Watford and South West Hertfordshire parliamentary constituencies

Thousand

12 months ending February each year	*Watford*	*South West Hertfordshire*
1997	4	3
2004	2	2

Note:

LFS estimates for small areas such as Parliamentary Constituencies are particularly subject to sampling variability because of the small size of the survey samples for local areas. They should therefore be treated with caution and, in particular, changes from year to year should not be used in isolation from the figures for a run of years.

Source:

ONS, Labour Force Survey

Table 2: JSA claimants resident in the Watford and South West Hertfordshire constituencies

	Annual averages	
	Watford	*South West Hertfordshire*
1995	3,063	2,143
2004 (Average over 11 months)	1,089	658

Source:

Jobcentre Plus Administrative system.

Employment (Bedfordshire)

Mr. Patrick Hall: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many women resident in Bedford and Kempston had paid jobs in *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* 2004. [207223]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Mr. Patrick Hall, dated 11 January 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question about employment. I am replying in his absence. (207223)

The statistics available are from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) and relate to the twelve-month periods ending February 1997 and February 2004. In these periods the numbers of women in employment, who were resident in the Bedford Parliamentary Constituency, were respectively 21,000 and 25,000.

For this purpose, people aged 16 or over are classed as in employment by the LFS, if they have done at least one hour of paid work (as an employee or self-employed) in the week prior to their LFS interview, or if they have a job that they are temporarily away from. Employment also includes people working in an unpaid capacity in a family business or those who are on job-related government supported training programmes, but the LFS samples for the periods quoted included no women in these categories resident in the Bedford Constituency.

These estimates from the LFS are, as with any sample survey, subject to sampling variability.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Academics (EU Funding)

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 13 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 827W, on Academics (EU Funding), which institutions have received EU funds in the past three years; and if she will make representations to the European Commission to publish the information. [207191]

Dr. Howells: Information on the income of all HE institutions in the UK, including amounts received from EU sources, is collected annually by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), and is published in their "Resources of Higher Education Institutions" reference volume. Copies of the latest edition, covering 2002/03, and those for earlier years are available from the House Library.

Accountancy

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what funding the Sector Skills Development Agency is giving to course providers for the Association of Accounting Technicians Bookkeeping Certificate in the current financial year. [206269]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Sector Skills Development Agency has not given funding to course providers for the Association of Accounting Technicians Bookkeeping Certificate in the current financial year. Funding of training providers is the responsibility of the Learning and Skills Council, and Mark Haysom, the Council's Chief Executive, will write to the hon. Member with this information. A copy of his reply will be placed in the Library.

Allegations Against Teachers

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what guidance has been issued to local education authorities (LEA) on recording allegations made against teachers; and what obligations LEAs are under to report those allegations when a teacher starts at a new school within the local education authority. [207541]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Guidance about procedure and practice for dealing with allegations against teachers and education staff drawn up jointly by the National Employers Organisation for School Teachers (NEOST) and the six teacher unions was updated and reissued in autumn 2002. It advises that a school should keep a copy of the pupil's statement or the record of an allegation on the section of the pupil's personal file which is not open to disclosure, together with a written record of the outcome of the investigation. Documents relating to an investigation must be retained in a secure place by the school, together with a written record of the outcome of the investigation. Where disciplinary action has been taken, copies should be retained on the member of staff's personal and confidential file in accordance with the school's disciplinary procedures.

My Department is currently consulting NEOST, the teacher unions, and other stakeholders about more detailed guidance on recording allegations about education staff that has been drafted by the network of Investigation and Referral Support Coordinators that my Department funds.

Previous and current employers, including schools and local authorities, are expected to provide relevant information in response to a request for a reference from a prospective new employer.

Criminal Offences

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list the criminal offences created in legislation sponsored by her Department in the *(a)* 2002–03 and *(b)* 2003–04 session, broken down by Act. [206878]

Derek Twigg: The Department did not create any criminal offences in legislation in the session 2002–03.

In session 2003–04, four new offences were created in legislation made by this Department. The new offences are found in the Children Act 2004:

Section 45—Power to establish registration scheme in England

This section gives the Secretary of State the power to set up through regulations a scheme for the registration of private foster carers. Subsection (3) makes it an offence for any person to knowingly make a statement which is false or misleading in a material particular in an application for registration as a private foster parent in accordance with the regulations. A person found guilty of such an offence is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 5 on the standard scale.

Subsection (11) provides that regulations may make it an offence for a person registered under those regulations who without reasonable excuse contravenes or otherwise fails to comply with any requirement imposed on him in the regulations. A person found guilty of such an offence and liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 5 on the standard scale.

Subsection 45(12) provides that regulations under this section may make it an offence for a person to foster a child privately while disqualified from being registered, unless certain exceptions apply. A person found guilty of such an offence is liable on summary conviction to *(a)* a fine not exceeding level 5 on the standard scale; *(b)* a term of imprisonment not exceeding 51 weeks (or, in the case of an offence committed before the commencement of section 251 of the Criminal Justice Act 2003), not exceeding six months); or *(c)* both.

Section 63—Disclosure of information by Inland Revenue

Section 63 amends Schedule 5 of the Tax Credits Act 2002 to enable the Inland Revenue to share Tax Credit, Child Benefit or Guardian's Allowance information (except where it relates to a person's income) with local authorities (or, in Northern Ireland, Health and Social Services Boards) for the purposes of inquiries and investigations relating to the welfare of a child. Subsection (5) makes it an offence for a staff member of an authority to disclose the information unless the disclosure is made: *(a)* in accordance with an enactment or order of court, *(b)* with the consent of person to whom the information relates, or *(c)* in a way that prevents identification of the person to whom the information relates. A person found guilty of such an offence is liable to a maximum of two years imprisonment.

Departmental Documents

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list the documents published by the Department sent to *(a)* primary schools and *(b)* secondary schools in each month since January 2004 broken down by number of pages. [207543]

Derek Twigg: We strictly monitor and gatekeep the information that we automatically send to schools. Details of documents sent to schools in the period requested are detailed in Annex A.

The academic year 2002/03 saw a 50 per cent. reduction on the number of documents sent to all schools compared to the previous 2001/02 year.

Going forward, we have successfully piloted an online ordering system that will enable schools to choose what information they want from the Department and when. This will put schools in control of what they receive.

Annex A: Automatic mailings to primary schools 2004

January	Spectrum 71 We're a Community Here Bullying a charter for action
February	Spectrum 72 Removing barriers to achievement
March	Spectrum 73 Write here write now Drugs Guidance for schools Drugs guidance for schools summary
April	Spectrum 74 Progression in Phonics Working together (Giving children a say)
May	Spectrum 75 Excellence and Enjoyment Performance pay progression
June/July	Spectrum 76
September	Spectrum 77/78 School teachers pay and conditions PPA Resource pack Healthy living blueprint Healthy living blueprint poster
October	Spectrum 79
November	Spectrum 80
December	Nil

Annex A: Automatic mailings to secondary schools 2004

January	Spectrum 71 Bullying a charter for action
February	Spectrum 72 Removing barriers to achievement Statutory changes to KS4
March	Spectrum 73 Drugs guidance for schools Drugs guidance for schools summary KS3 Parents evening pack EMA application forms 14–19 Reform: Progress interim report
April	Spectrum 74 Working together (Giving children a say)
May	Spectrum 75 Performance pay progression
June/July	Spectrum 76
September	Spectrum 77/78 School teachers pay and conditions PPA resource pack Healthy living blueprint Healthy living blueprint poster
October	Spectrum 79
November	Spectrum 80
December	Nil

Departmental Properties

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many properties are held by the Department; what total floor space these properties provide; how many properties are vacant; and how much floor space vacant properties comprise. [206491]

Derek Twigg: My Department holds 29 properties with a total floor space of 131,552 sq m. The number of totally vacant properties as at 1 December 2004 amounts to five with a total floor space of 3,134 sq m.

Disabilities

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many of the staff employed by her Department have a declared disability. [205721]

Derek Twigg: The Cabinet Office collects and publishes annually statistical information on the civil service by Department. These include data on the number of staff who have a declared disability.

The latest available information at April 2004 is available in the Library and on the civil service website at the following address:

http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management_information/statistical_information/statistics/publications/xls/disability_apr04__4nov04.xls.

Education Budget

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills under what statutory powers the Government reduced the education budget for North Yorkshire for financial year 2004–05. [206542]

Derek Twigg: Each year between 1997–98 and 2004–05 North Yorkshire has seen a real terms increase in education funding per pupil aged 3 to 19.

North Yorkshire LEA

	£ per pupil
1997–98	2,710
1998–99	2,770
1999–2000	2,890
2000–01	3,130
2001–02	3,250
2002–03	3,350
2003–04	3,480
2004–05	3,600

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what account is taken in provision of capital expenditure to *(a)* local education authorities and *(b)* schools of the (i) running costs of schools, (ii) pupil numbers in schools and (iii) the teacher to pupil ratio. [206545]

Derek Twigg: No account is taken in the allocation of capital expenditure to *(a)* local education authorities and *(b)* schools in respect of the (i) running costs of schools and (iii) the teacher to pupil ratio. With respect to (ii) pupil numbers in schools *(a)* local education authorities' formulaic funding is allocated 40 per cent. by pupil numbers and 60 per cent. by need, together with an allocation for new additional pupil places *(b)* schools are allocated devolved formula capital which is solely determined by pupil numbers.

Exclusions

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans she has to publish termly figures for exclusions. [207557]

Derek Twigg: The first termly collection of exclusions data related to summer 2003. There were concerns about the quality of the data returned but summary information was published to give source on R and S Gateway 'experimental statistics' on 29 July 2004.

Information derived from the three subsequent collection exercises in autumn 2003, spring 2004 and summer 2004 are expected to be included in a Statistical First Release scheduled before the end of June 2005. The actual date will be pre-announced in due course on the Department's R and S Gateway (http://www.dfes.gov.uk/cgi-bin/rsgateway/search.pl?keyw=127&q2=Search).

Publishing information across a full academic year will allow a better understanding of any seasonal (i.e. termly) trends and present a coherent picture of exclusions across the 2003/04 academic year. Once we have a better understanding of the termly trends then more frequent releases of data can be considered.

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans she has to publish data on exclusion, broken down by type of special educational need. [207558]

Derek Twigg: Information on exclusions broken down by type of special educational need (SEN) is not currently available.

Information type of SEN was collected for the first time in January 2004, for pupils on roll in 2003/04, but the latest available exclusions figures relate to 2002/03. Permanent exclusions data for 2003/04 are expected to be available in May or June 2005 and it should then be possible to link individual pupil records to the existing data on the type of SEN. If this work is carried out successfully then publication of summary information will be considered for later in 2005.

Higher Education

Mr. Keith Bradley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of students aged 18 years who entered higher education in the academic year 2002/03 were resident in *(a)* the City of Manchester and *(b)* Manchester, Withington constituency. [207072]

Dr. Howells *[holding answer 10 January 2005]:* The latest available information is taken from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) student record. Information on the parliamentary constituency of a student is derived from the student's postcode[1].

Domicile	*Number*	*Percentage of UK domiciled 18-year-old entrants*
City of Manchester[2]	600	0.4
Manchester, Withington constituency	190	0.1
All UK	152,210	100.0

[1] Based on 18-year-olds who have a known postcode. In 2002/03, around 2 per cent. of UK domiciles could not be allocated to a constituency using the postcode information held.

[2] Defined as those students domiciled in the constituencies: Manchester Blackley, Manchester Central, Manchester Gorton and Manchester Withington.

Source:

Higher Education Statistics Agency Student Record

Jon Cruddas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many pupils from the Dagenham constituency have entered higher education in each of the last 15 years. [207160]

Dr. Howells: The available information is taken from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) student record. Information on the parliamentary constituency domicile of a student is derived from the students' postcode.

18-year-old undergraduate entrants to UK HE institutions from Dagenham constituency

Academic year	*Entrants*
1997/98[1]	80
1998/99	90
1999/2000	80
2000/01	85
2001/02	95
2002/03	100

[1] Figures for 1997/98 do not include entrants at the Open University as these cannot be identified on the dataset.

Note:

Figures are based upon a snapshot as at 1 December for 18-year-olds who have a known postcode. In each year, around 2–3 per cent. of UK domiciled students did not have sufficient postcode information to allow them to be allocated to a constituency. Figures are rounded to the nearest 5.

Source:

Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) Student Record

IT (Disciplinary Procedures)

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many staff in her Department have *(a)* received official warnings and *(b)* faced disciplinary procedures following breaches of IT policy in each year since 1997. [205812]

Derek Twigg: The Department for Education and Skills, established in 2001, allows personal use of the internet and email outside normal working hours. Staff are warned that internet access may be monitored and misuse may lead to disciplinary action. Staff are reminded of the policy each time they log on to the Department's network and must indicate that they accept the policy before log in can be completed.

The number of cases of computer misuse within the Department for Education and Skills is as follows:

	Number of cases	*Warning issued*	*Disciplinary action taken*
2001	14	6	8
2002	5	0	5
2003	2	0	2
2004	1	0	1

New monitoring software, introduced in 2003, prevents staff accessing any inappropriate site, and records any attempted access.

Learning and Skills Council

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much the *(a)* national, *(b)* regional and *(c)* county branches of the Learning and Skills Council spent on (i) fees to management consultancy firms, broken down by firm, (ii) the Centre for Excellence in Leadership, (iii) the Learning and Skills Development Agency and (iv) the Standards Unit in the last year for which figures are available; and if she will make a statement. [207527]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: This is a matter for the Learning and Skills Council. Mark Haysom, the Council's Chief Executive, will write to the hon. Member with this information and a copy of his reply will be placed in the Library.

Low Skills

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what her latest estimate is of the number of people of working age in Leeds West constituency who have low or no skills. [207211]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Estimates of the number of people of working age in Leeds West who have low or no skills are shown in the following table.

Level of highest qualification held by people of working age, 2003/04

	Leeds West (number)	*Leeds West (percentage)*	*Yorkshire and the Humber (percentage)*	*Great Britain (percentage)*
Below NVQ2 or equivalent	11,750	17.6	20.4	19.3
No qualifications	13,000	20.2	16.0	15.0

Source:
Annual Local Area Labour Force Survey, 2003/04

Pupil Absenteeism

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list for 2003–04 for *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools in each parliamentary constituency (i) the number of day pupils of compulsory school age, (ii) the number of pupils that missed at least one session due to unauthorised absence, (iii) the percentage of day pupils absent for at least one session and (iv) the percentage of half days missed due to unauthorised absence. [207547]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The information requested has been placed in the House of Commons Libraries.

Senior Women

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many women there are in senior positions in her Department. [205722]

Derek Twigg: The Cabinet Office collects and publishes annually statistical information on the Civil Service by Department. These include data on the number of women in senior positions in Departments.

The latest available information at April 2004 is available in the Library and on the civil service website at the following address:

http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management_information/statistical_information/statistics/publications/xls/gender_apr04_4nov04.xls.

Sixth Forms

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the post-16 participation rates were of pupils attending *(a)* schools without a sixth form and *(b)* schools with a sixth form, by socio-economic grouping in the last year for which figures are available. [207550]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The following table shows participation rates for 16-year-olds in 2002 by parental socio-economic status for people who were in maintained schools in year 11 in 2000/01. Rates are provided for (i) full-time education and (ii) education and training. Figures are only available for pupils who were in maintained schools in year 11.

Participation rates of 16-year-olds in 2002

Percentage

	Participation in full-time education		*Participation in education and training*[1]	
Parental occupation (NS-SEC)	*Maintained schools without sixth form*	*Maintained schools with sixth form*	*Maintained schools without sixth form*	*Maintained schools with sixth form*
Higher professional	81	86	93	94
Lower professional	73	79	88	89
Intermediate	65	68	80	82
Lower supervisory	55	59	77	77
Routine	57	60	75	77
Other	63	63	77	77
Total	66	70	82	84

[1] Education and training includes those in full-time education; Government Supported Training; in employment with training; or in other education and training.

Source:
Youth Cohort Study, Cohort 11

SEN Children

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she made of the number of children with special educational needs who receive free transport to school because *(a)* it is specified in a statement and *(b)* it has been agreed between the parent and local education authority but is not specified in a statement. [207556]

Derek Twigg: We do not collect that information.

Special Advisers

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many special advisers there are in the Department, broken down by civil service pay-grade. [206509]

Derek Twigg: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my hon. Friend the Minister for the Cabinet Office on 21 December 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1640–641W.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills on how many occasions between 31 March 2002 and 31 March 2003 her special advisers travelled abroad in an official capacity; what places were visited; and how much each visit cost. [207175]

Derek Twigg: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given on 1 September 2003, *Official Report*, column 760W.

Student Grants

Mr. Fabian Hamilton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how she will assess the income of a household for means testing for student grant awards. [207196]

Dr. Howells: Under the current income assessment for higher education student support, the gross taxable income of the student is added to that of their parents or partner to arrive at the total household income. Certain types of income are disregarded, in particular, any income earned by the student from jobs done during the course. Local education authorities will assess the student's income in the current academic year and, usually, the parents' or partner's income in the previous financial year. LEAs will then work out whether the student is entitled to a Higher Education Grant and whether their parents or partner should pay a contribution towards the student's tuition fees and living costs.

Mr. Fabian Hamilton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether the income of step-parents will be taken into account when assessing a student for *(a)* a grant award and *(b)* the remission of tuition fees. [207197]

Dr. Howells: For higher education students starting their course in 2004/05 or after, the income of step-parents will be taken into account in the assessment of grants for tuition fees and grants for living costs.

Taskforces

Mr. Francois: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much her Department spent on taskforces and similar bodies in each year since 1997. [204877]

Derek Twigg *[holding answer 20 December 2004]*: The information requested for taskforces is listed as follows. Information on the costs of other individual ad hoc advisory groups is not available.

	Taskforce	*Cost (£)*
1997	—	0
1998	Disability Rights Task Force (DRTF), New Deal Task Force (NDTF), Skills Task Force (STF)	204,000
1999	DRTF, NDTF, STF	539,000
2000	NDTF, STF	798,000
2001	—	0
2002	—	0
2003	—	0
2004	—	0

WORK AND PENSIONS

Benefit Claimants (Dagenham)

Jon Cruddas: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in each ward of the Dagenham constituency claim *(a)* disability living allowance and *(b)* winter fuel payments. [207164]

Malcolm Wicks: The number of people in each ward of the Dagenham constituency in receipt of disability living allowance and winter fuel payments is in the table.

Ward name	*Disability living allowance*	*Winter fuel payment*
Alibon	600	1610
Chadwell Heath	405	1990
Eastbrook	423	1930
Heath	555	1790
Parsloes	610	1555
River	535	1435
Valence	615	1800
Village	535	1555
Whalebone	385	1615

Notes:

1. All Wards based on Census Wards—those current as at April 2003.

2. DLA figures are taken at August 2003, the latest currently available at ward level, and include all DLA claimants including children, working age and pensioners claiming DLA.

3. WFP Data is the latest currently available, Winter 2003–04.

4. All benefit counts at ward level are rounded to a multiple of 5.

Source:

IAD Information Centre

Child Custody (Legal Expenses)

Dr. Pugh: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether regulations allow ongoing legal expenses, incurred through contesting custody and access arrangements, to be included in a lone parent's necessary expenditure when an assessment is made by the Child Support Agency. [207564]

Mr. Pond: Ongoing legal expenses incurred through contesting custody and access arrangements are not included in a lone parent's necessary expenditure when an assessment is made by the Child Support Agency under either the old or new schemes.

Company Pensions

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will place in the Library the advice he has received on the compatibility of auto-enrolment of employees in company pension schemes with the European Distance Marketing Directive. [206622]

Malcolm Wicks: I have asked officials to carry out research to explore the effectiveness of automatic enrolment as a way of increasing participation in work-based pension schemes, and to identify any practical and legislative requirements that may discourage employers from adopting this and related joining techniques.

Occupational pensions are not affected by the European Directive on Distance Marketing of Financial Services and its associated regulations. Personal pensions can in certain circumstances be affected where the pension contract requires an employee contribution and is established exclusively by distance marketing methods, i.e. without any face to face contact between the provider and the employee in question.

The Financial Services (Distance Marketing) Regulations 2004 do not prevent the use of automatic enrolment with personal pensions where the employee makes a prior request for the provision of financial services, or where there is no requirement on the employee to contribute, or where the contract is not established exclusively at a distance.

The Department is working closely with the Financial Services Authority and HM Treasury to help employers who operate automatic enrolment, or who are considering using it, to understand their obligations under these regulations.

Child Support Agency

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what training staff who work for the Child Support Agency receive in understanding the law in relation to child support; and if he will make a statement. [203083]

Mr. Pond *[holding answer 7 December 2004]:* The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive, Mr. Doug Smith. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Doug Smith to Mr. Paul Goodman, dated 11 January 2005:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about he Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what training staff who work for the Child Support Agency receive in understanding the law in relation to Child Support; and if he will make a statement.

Child Support Agency staff receive training on the Child Support Act using Decision Makers Guides and Child Support Guides. Training on decision-making includes the Child Support Act, Case Law and Statute Law.

Staff which deal with issues such as enforcement and debt collection receive specialist training.

Departmental Policies

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will set out, including statistical information relating as directly as possible to the constituency, the effect on Middlesbrough, South and Cleveland, East constituency of his Department's policies since 8 June 2001. [206834]

Mr. Pond: We have undertaken a fundamental overhaul of the welfare system, transforming it to an active system that fights poverty, creates opportunity and helps people become self-sufficient and independent.

Since 2001 the Government have significantly extended and improved civil rights for disabled people in areas such as employment, education, access to goods and services and transport. Disabled people in Middlesbrough South and Cleveland East will have benefited from these improvements in disability rights. Similarly families with severely disabled 3 and 4-year-old children who are unable, or virtually unable, to walk will have benefited from the Government's decision to lower the minimum age entitlement to the higher rate mobility component of disability living allowance from April 2001, whilst older and less well-off carers have gained extra help through the provisions within the National Carers Strategy.

Through Jobcentre Plus, we are promoting work as the best form of welfare for people of working age. The number of people in work is at historically high levels of over 28.39 million; in Middlesbrough South and Cleveland East, the proportion in employment has risen to 68.1 per cent.

Our New Deals have helped lone parents, the young unemployed, the long-term unemployed, disabled people, the over-50s and partners of unemployed people to move from benefit into work. Nationally over 1.1 million people have been helped into work by the New Deals, with over 2,890 in Middlesbrough South and Cleveland East alone.

Significant progress has been made in eradicating child poverty and the latest figures for 2002–03 show that there were over half a million fewer children in relative low income than there were in 1996–97. Since 2001–02 incomes for lone parents in receipt of benefit have risen by more than prices or the cost of living. In April 2005 the child allowance rate in income support for a child up to 18 years old will have been increased by 40 per cent. since 2001–02. Child rates in income support and jobseeker's allowance are also being increased above inflation in April 2005 in line with child tax credit upratings. All of this has benefited 2,200 families in Middlesbrough South and Cleveland East.

We want all pensioners to have a decent and secure income in retirement and to share fairly in the rising prosperity of the country and our first priority has been to help the poorest pensioners. The Government will be spending nearly £10 billion more in 2004–05 (in 2004–05 prices) on pensioners as a result of measures introduced since 1997, with around half going to the poorest third.

Our reforms include the state second pension, which helps more future pensioners build up better pensions, especially carers. Pension credit, introduced from

October 2003, provides a contribution to a guaranteed minimum income for those aged 60 and over and, for the first time, those aged 65 and over may be rewarded for savings and income. Around 5,000 pensioners in Middlesbrough South and Cleveland East are receiving pension credit, with an average award of £37.31 per week.

We know that older people are disproportionately affected by fuel poverty. This winter (2004–05) we have again made available a winter fuel payment of £200 for each eligible household with someone aged 60 or over, to help with their fuel bills. The additional 80+ Annual Payment gives an extra £100 to eligible households where there is someone aged 80 or over. Last winter there were 13,740 households in Middlesbrough South and Cleveland East which received the winter fuel payment and, of those, 2,885 households received the additional Annual Payment. We expect numbers to be similar for this winter (2004–05).

Additionally for this year eligible households with someone aged 70 or over will receive the One-off 70+ Payment of £100 to help with living expenses including council tax bills. It will be paid with the winter fuel payment and last winter there were 7,970 households in Middlesbrough South and Cleveland East with someone aged 70 or over which received a winter fuel payment. We expect a similar number to receive the One-off 70+ Payment this winter (2004–05).

Some 17,800 pensioners in Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland benefited from the above inflation increase in the rate of basic state pension from April 2003. Those over 75, of whom we estimate there are about 7,000 in Middlesbrough South and Cleveland East, may also qualify for free TV licences.

In 2002–03 we estimate there were around 10 million adults (22 per cent.) and 0.7 million children (5 per cent.) in Great Britain likely to be covered by the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA).

The figures can be broken down to regional level which shows that 29 per cent. of adults and 6 per cent. of children in the North East are likely to be covered by the provisions of the DDA.

Information on the numbers of customers in the North East who are in receipt of disability living allowance (DLA) and attendance allowance (AA) is in the following table. This information is not available at constituency level.

North East

Operational year	*DLA/AA recipients*
2001	208,000
2002	213,000
2003	219,000
2004	224,000

Source:

DWP Information Centre. Figures are from a 5 per cent. sample at 31 May each year.

Employment and Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council

Mr. Hood: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the outcome was of the Employment and Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council on 7 December; what the Government's stance was on the issues discussed, including its voting record; and if he will make a statement. [203835]

Mr. Pond: I represented the UK for the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council in Brussels on 7 December 2004, accompanied by my hon. friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Employment Relations, Consumers and Postal Services (Mr. Sutcliffe).

The Council reached political agreement on a draft directive protecting workers from the risks of exposure to optical radiation. I maintained the UK parliamentary scrutiny reserve on this item.

On working time, there was no agreement. Although there was majority support for the Dutch Presidency proposed solution to SIMAP/Jaeger, a blocking minority supported by the Commission opposed the Presidency compromise. However, the Council debate provided a useful way forward for further discussion.

The Council endorsed the Employment Committee's Opinion on the Annual Commission Report on migration and integration without discussion.

The Council endorsed the EMCO and SPC opinion on the Kok report, and completed a table round on the Social Policy Agenda in the context of the Lisbon Strategy. The Commissioner emphasised that the EU must respond to the challenges of globalisation, ageing, increasing diversity and the shift to a knowledge-based society. All delegations agreed that Lisbon was the right strategy to tackle this, and did not need to be revisited. The SPA must in turn support Lisbon, increasing the quantity and quality of jobs, balancing flexibility and security, and building social inclusion. For the UK, I intervened to argue that employment was always the best social policy and, furthermore, that employment growth was the key to sustaining the European Social Model. I emphasised that economic and social policy were therefore mutually dependent rather than being in conflict with each other.

The Council agreed a general approach to the recast on the Directives covering on Equal Treatment between men and women without discussion. There was no discussion on this point.

The Council agreed a general approach to extending funding for the two equality programmes—the Community framework strategy on gender equality and the Community Action Programme—to 2006, without discussion.

The Council adopted the Council Conclusions on sexual harassment at the workplace without discussion.

Income Support

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many *(a)* male and *(b)* female recipients of income support, excluding minimum income guarantees and pension credit there have been in each year since 1979. [203178]

Mr. Pond: The information is in the following table:

Income support claimants and supplementary benefit claimants by gender

	Male	*Female*
1979	572,000	560,000
1980	798,000	625,000
1981	1,233,000	752,000
1982	1,591,000	895,000
1983	1,714,000	984,000
1984	1,856,000	1,070,000
1985[1]	Not available	Not available
1986	2,017,000	1,204,000
1987	1,912,000	1,256,000
1988	1,403,000	1,229,000
1989	1,317,000	1,237,000
1990	1,245,000	1,261,000
1991	1,527,000	1,385,000
1992	1,830,000	1,565,000
1993	2,096,000	1,694,000
1994	2,136,200	1,753,400
1995	2,089,900	1,796,900
1996[2]	1,982,700	1,799,600
1997[2]	765,400	1,472,900
1998	762,900	1,431,400
1999	765,900	1,424,600
2000	783,000	1,413,000
2001	798,400	1,412,900
2002	791,900	1,391,800
2003	801,600	1,402,500
2004	784,300	1,375,600

[1] Numbers are not available due to industrial action.

[2] Unemployed claimants are included in the figures up to and including 1996. Income support for the unemployed was replaced by income-based jobseeker's allowance in October 1996.

Note:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest thousand up to and including 1993 and to the nearest hundred thereafter.
2. Totals may not sum due to rounding.
3. Income support replaced supplementary benefit in April 1988.
4. Excludes pensioners which are defined as follows:
Up to and including 1987, pensioners are defined as claimants of pensionable age. From 1988 pensioners are defined as benefit units where either the claimant and/or partner are aged 60 or over
5. Numbers are based on sample data and are therefore subject to a degree of sampling error.
6. All estimates relate to a point in time. For 1979 the month of the inquiry was November, for 1980 to 1984 the month was December, for 1986 the month was February, 1987 to 2004 was May.

Source:

DWP Information Centre, 1 per cent. and 5 per cent. samples.

Pensioners

Clive Efford: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many pensioners in Eltham are receiving *(a)* pension credit, *(b)* winter fuel payment, *(c)* free TV licences and *(d)* the additional £100 council tax contribution; and how much has been spent on each of these. [207269]

Malcolm Wicks: At 31° October there were 3,040 households, comprising 3,670 individuals, receiving pension credit in Eltham, with an average award of £47.92. Between 1 October 2003 and 31 October 2004 an estimated £8.2 million, rounded to the nearest £100,000, was paid in pension credit in Eltham.

In winter 2003–04 there were 14,505 people in Eltham in receipt of winter fuel payment, at a cost of £2,530,250. We expect the figures for this winter to be similar.

Information on the numbers of households in receipt of free television licences, or the amount spent, is not available by constituency. The number of households with at least one resident aged 75 or over in Eltham was 4,835 in winter 2003–04. Each of these households would be eligible for a free TV licence. Total expenditure on free TV licences in the United Kingdom in 2003–04 was around £408 million.

Of the 14,505 people who received a winter fuel payment in Eltham in 2003–04, 8,415 were aged over 70. We expect a similar number to receive the One-off 70+ Payment of £100 this winter. The cost of this payment is not yet available.

Notes:

1. Numbers of recipients are rounded to the nearest five.
2. Pension credit figures are available for 31 October 2004 as the final output of processes that were put in place to deliver special monthly reporting during the first year of the roll-out of pension credit. As Parliament was told in the statement accompanying the last such report, data will in future be available on a quarterly basis, in line with standard departmental practice. The next report, covering data as at 31 December 2004, should be laid in the House in January 2005.
3. The figure for expenditure on free TV licences is derived from the BBC Annual Report and Accounts and is rounded to the nearest million pounds.
4. Any residence found to have four or more occupants aged 60 and over is not included in the total household figure as it is assumed to be RCNH (Residential Care/Nursing Home).

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how many pensioners in Scotland were eligible for the £100 winter fuel payment for the over eighties last winter; and how many received it; [207575]

(2) how many pensioners in Scotland will be eligible for an additional winter fuel payment for the over eighties this winter. [207576]

Malcolm Wicks: It is not possible to provide an accurate estimate of the number of people in Scotland eligible to receive the additional winter fuel payment for the over eighties. 184,760 pensioners in Scotland received the additional winter fuel payment for the over eighties last winter. We would expect the number to be similar for this winter.

Note:

Numbers are rounded to the nearest 5.

Source:

IAD Information Centre, 100 per cent. sample.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Communications Director

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the last date of employment of her Department's most recent

Communications Director was; what steps she has taken to find a replacement; and when she expects a replacement to be in place. [206027]

Margaret Beckett: The Department's former Director of Communications left on 23 July 2004 to take up another appointment. Recruitment consultants were engaged to assist in the search and advertising process to identify a replacement, in line with the Civil Service Commissioners Recruitment Code. An advertisement was placed in the Sunday Times on 11 July and the Times on 15 July.

The selection panel was chaired by a Civil Service Commissioner, Maggie Semple. Other members were Defra's Permanent Secretary, Sir Brian Bender; the Permanent Secretary, Government Communications, Howell James; and the Chief Executive of the Countryside Agency, Richard Wakeford who is one of Defra's non-executive board members. A long- listing and short-listing process took place prior to the panel interviews. The decision not to make an appointment as a result of this competition has just been taken and all candidates have been notified. Further consideration is being given to the means of filling the vacancy.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs who is supervising the day-to-day running of her Department's Communications Unit; what that person's official job title is; and if she will make a statement. [206028]

Margaret Beckett: Ms Kelly Freeman is currently the acting Director of Communications for Defra.

Hazardous Waste Directive

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the impact of European Court of Justice case C-431/02, as detailed in OJ C300 volume 47 of 4 December, on UK implementation of Directive 91/689/EEC; what measures she will take to comply with the ruling; and what estimate she has made of the costs which will be incurred in so complying. [207169]

Mr. Morley: Compliance with the ruling on the implementation of Directive 91/689/EEC on hazardous waste will largely be achieved in England through new hazardous waste regulations which are planned to come fully into force in July 2005. Defra completed a consultation on the new regime in October 2004. The consultation paper is available on the following website: http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/wastereg-haz/index.htm.

The estimated costs of compliance are set out in the partial regulatory impact assessment which accompanied the consultation. Comprehensive guidance for businesses on the new regulations is proposed to be published three months before the new regime comes into force. Full compliance with the ruling will be complete once revised exemptions from waste management licensing requirements for establishments involved in the recovery and reuse of hazardous wastes are consulted on and implemented later in 2005.

Landfill

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if it is Government policy to comply with the requirements of Article 5 of the Landfill Directive in 2010, 2013 and 2020. [206775]

Mr. Morley: Yes; Government policies such as the Landfill Tax, local authority statutory performance standards for recycling and composting and the Landfill Allowances Trading Scheme will help ensure that the targets set out in Article 5(2) of the Landfill Directive are met (taking into account the four year derogation available to member states that landfilled over 80 per cent. of its municipal waste in 1995).

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what total operational landfill capacity was closed in each year between 1999 and 2003. [206824]

Mr. Morley: The data are not available in the format requested. The Environment Agency does not hold data on 'closed operational capacity'. Landfills licensed under the Waste Management Licensing Regulations 1994 do not 'close'. The operator can choose to stop operating and yet still have a waste management licence. He can choose to surrender his licence but not until he has satisfied the legislative requirements for surrender.

Pair Trawling

Mr. Streeter: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what action she plans to take concerning the pair trawling team that caused the deaths of dolphins whilst fishing for bass near Bigbury Bay, Devon, on 13 November; and if she will make a statement. [199824]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 29 November 2004]*: According to scientists who carry out post mortem examinations on behalf of Defra on stranded cetaceans, the stranding of a live common dolphin in the Bigbury Bay area on 17 November was not caused by pair trawling or any other fishing activity in the area on 13 November. The cause of death may be due to old age or disease but will be known once the full post mortem has been conducted.

However, Defra-funded research has already demonstrated a bycatch problem associated with the pair trawl fishery for bass which is why I intend to introduce legislation to prohibit this fishery within 12 miles of the south west coast.

Seamounts

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what action she has taken for the protection and management of Seamounts as referred to in her letter of 9 September to the hon. Member for Linlithgow, reference 20272/JF. [206898]

Mr. Bradshaw: The UK is continuing to work through the EU and other international fora to improve the management and protection of the marine environment. The need for additional protection for seamounts will be an element in these considerations.

Recently, all North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission contracting parties supported the Norwegian proposal to ban all fishing, apart from pelagic trawling, in four seamounts (Hecate, Altair, Antialair, and Faraday seamounts, as well as a section of the Reykjanes Ridge). A fifth, for Hatton Bank, awaits further scientific advice.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) whether she has been informed of breaches of the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers in her Department since its implementation; [201300]

(2) how many appeals were made by civil servants to the Civil Service Commissioners regarding special advisers in her Department between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004 and when each appeal was lodged. [201382]

Alun Michael: None. I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my hon. Friend, the then the Minister of State for the Cabinet Office (Mrs Ruth Kelly), on 8 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 578lV.

Waste

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much liquid hazardous waste was deposited in *(a)* 1998, *(b)* 1999 and *(c)* 2000 in merchant landfill sites' proprietary landfills in the year before such landfilling was banned; and where and how such liquid hazardous waste is now being treated. [203662]

Mr. Morley: Data for liquid special waste deposited in landfills to the nearest tonne were recorded as follows for each of the years indicated:

Liquid special waste sent to landfill (tonnes)

2000	[1]142,227
2001	139,362
2002	[1]63,850

[1] Up until the ban of hazardous liquid disposal by landfill came into force in July 2002. Data for 1998 and 1999 are not immediately available

Since the ban on hazardous liquid disposal by landfill came into force typical treatments for hazardous liquid wastes will have included physico-chemical treatment and biological treatment processes.

These use techniques such as precipitation, coagulation and filtration with subsequent dewatering of sludges and disposal of treated non-hazardous liquids to sewer with appropriate discharge consents. Some high temperature incineration and or use as a fuel may also have been employed where the waste either was of a sufficiently high calorific value or could not otherwise be treated. No figures are currently available that indicate the amounts sent to each method. The total amount of hazardous liquid waste sent for treatment recorded for 2003 was 1,964,911 tonnes.

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many tonnes of waste were sent to sites registered as exempt with the Environment Agency in *(a)* 1999, *(b)* 2000, *(c)* 2001, *(d)* 2002 and *(e)* 2003. [206777]

Mr. Morley: These data are not available in the format requested. Those who register exemptions with the Environment Agency are not required to submit reports to the agency on the quantities of waste they handle. While many of the exemptions prescribe quantity limits (weight/volume), registrants are also currently not required to keep records of the quantities of waste handled in undertaking the specified activities.

However, where waste is received at exempt sites, the provisions of the Duty of Care (DoC) apply in respect of the transfer of waste to the registrant. The DoC requires records of waste transfers to be kept by both parties so there is an audit trail for the waste, including the amount of waste transferred.

The Department is about to put forward amending regulations to six of the higher risk exemptions. These amendments will require those who register these exemptions to keep records of the amount of waste handled for two years. We are also considering how data provision could be improved in the future.

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many sites registered as exempt with the Environment Agency were visited by officers of the Environment Agency in *(a)* 1999, *(b)* 2000, *(c)* 2001, *(d)* 2002 and *(e)* 2003. [206778]

Mr. Morley: The number of visits made to exempt sites between 1999–2000 and 2003–04 is given as follows. No information is held on the number of individual sites inspected.

	Visits
1999–2000	[1]4,527
2000–01	[1]3,333
2001–02	[2]3,202
2002–03	[3]3,168
2003–04	[3]4,306

[1] Only to scrap metal sites and those involving the final deposit of waste on land

[2] Only to scrap metal sites, those involving the final deposit of waste on land and landspreading

[3] All exemptions

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what proportion of the Environment Agency's total expenditure is spent tackling the illegal disposal of waste. [206784]

Mr. Morley: In 2003–04, the Environment Agency spent approximately 1 per cent. of its total budget in tackling the illegal disposal of waste.

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the Environment Agency's budget was for regulation of waste management for *(a)* 2000–01, *(b)* 2001–02, *(c)* 2002–03 and *(d)* 2003–04, and what percentage this was of the agency's total budget in each year. [206785]

Mr. Morley: The Environment Agency's budget for the regulation of waste management and its percentage of the agency's total budget in each of the years from 2000–01 to 2003–04 was as follows:

	Waste management budget (£ million)	*Total budget (£ million)*	*Waste management percentage of total budget*
2000–01	73	650	11
2001–02	74	715	10
2002–03	77	759	10
2003–04	82	806	10

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what proportion of prosecutions brought by the Environment Agency for alleged incidences of fly-tipping of waste did not result in a conviction. [206786]

Mr. Morley: Of 992 prosecutions for the illegal deposit of waste between 1 January 2000 and 31 December 2003, only 69 cases (7 per cent.) resulted in the defendants being acquitted of one or more charges.

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many convictions were secured by the Environment Agency in *(a)* 2000, *(b)* 2001, *(c)* 2002 and *(d)* 2003 for incidences relating to fly-tipping of waste. [206787]

Mr. Morley: The number of charges for which a conviction was secured by the Environment Agency in offences relating to the illegal deposit of waste (section 33(1)(A) of the Environment Protection Act) between 2000–03 was as follows:

	Number
2000	317
2001	372
2002	414
2003	345

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the total expenditure by the Environment Agency was in *(a)* 2000, *(b)* 2001, *(c)* 2002 and *(d)* 2003 resulting from (i) fly-tipping of waste and (ii) other illegal activity by non-regulated persons relating to waste. [206788]

Mr. Morley: The Environment Agency does not produce a detailed analysis of its expenditure that separately identifies the amount of annual expenditure resulting from fly-tipped waste. Nor does it produce such financial data on a calendar year basis.

However, based on a technical assessment of fiscal-year expenditure, figures are available to show how much the Agency has spent in tackling all illegal waste activity from 1999 to 2003.

These figures do not include any expenditure on enforcement action in relation to waste management licences or other site permits.

	£ million
1999–2000	4.3
2000–01	3.5
2001–02	4.7
2002–03	5.5
2003–04	6.9

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what proportion of total expenditure on waste management services by local authorities was spent on tendering for waste management contracts in each year between 1999 and 2003. [206841]

Mr. Morley: The Department does not collect this information. Information relating to the costs incurred in tendering for waste management contracts will be held only by individual local authorities and may be commercially sensitive.

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the total amount spent by local authorities on tendering for contracts *(a)* to collect and *(b)* to dispose of waste was in each year between 1999 and 2003. [206842]

Mr. Morley: The Department does not collect this information. Information relating to the costs incurred in tendering for waste management contracts will be held only by individual local authorities and may be commercially sensitive.

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what predictions she has made of the total cost to local authorities of managing the municipal waste stream in *(a)* 2010, *(b)* 2013 and *(c)* 2020. [206844]

Mr. Morley: Defra uses models to estimate total local authority expenditure on municipal waste management over a three-year time frame. The estimates generated are based on the best available assumptions at the time.

The models cannot be used to make firm predictions of spend over a longer time frame because of the increasing number of assumptions and uncertainties involved.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Christmas Cards

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) how many hours of staff time were taken up in preparation of Christmas cards in 2004; [205094]

(2) how many departmental staff have responsibility for preparing Christmas cards. [205095]

Mr. Paul Murphy: The preparation of Christmas cards is carried out during normal working hours and therefore cannot be disaggregated from normal duties. Likewise, as all levels of staff can be involved at various stages of the preparation of Christmas cards it is impossible to give an exact number.

Departmental Entertainment Costs

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much has been spent on entertainment by his Department in each year since 1997, broken down by *(a)* food, *(b)* alcohol, *(c)* staff and *(d)* accommodation. [204351]

Mr. Paul Murphy: Information is not held in the format requested by the hon. Member.

The Northern Ireland Office (excluding its agencies and NDPBs) spent the following overall amounts on entertainment, which incorporates *(a)*, *(b)*, *(c)* and *(d)* in each financial year since 1997:

Financial year	£
1997–98	214,473
1998–99	322,853
1999–2000	320,230
2000–01	246,517
2001–02	221,477
2002–03	363,755
2003–04	319,741
2004–05 (to date)	185,170

Diabetics

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the operation of regulations preventing people with diabetes from holding a driving licence; and whether there are plans to amend these regulations. [206731]

Angela Smith: The Motor Vehicles (Driving Licences) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1996 (as amended) prescribes insulin-dependent diabetes as a relevant disability in respect of the issue of Group 2 licences (i.e. those that authorise the driving of passenger carrying vehicles and large goods vehicles).

Subject to certain conditions, a licence authorising the driving of vehicles in categories Cl, Cl + E and Cl + E (8.25 tonnes) (sub-categories of large goods vehicles) may be granted to a person who suffers from insulin dependent diabetes.

A licence authorising the driving of passenger carrying vehicles must not be issued to a person suffering from insulin dependent diabetes.

In deciding medical aspects of fitness to drive a motor vehicle the guidance issued by the Secretary of State for Transport's Honorary Medical Advisory Panel is followed.

The Department for Transport in Great Britain has initiated a programme of research which will help increase knowledge about diabetes and driving and the EC Committee on the Driving Licence has established a working group to look at diabetes and the implications for driving. It is expected to report back to the Driving Licence Committee in spring 2005.

When the results of these initiatives are known, current arrangements will be reviewed.

EU Project Funding

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what his estimate is of the value of European Union funding for projects from LEADER and partnership groups which are dependent on securing planning permission; and what priority is being given by the planning service to current planning applications from LEADER and partnership groups in Northern Ireland which cannot spend approved EU funded grants until planning permission has been received for their project. [205894]

Angela Smith: In relation to the LEADER + programme there are 58 projects seeking funding and dependent on securing planning permission. These projects have a cumulative value of £1,155,005.

The planning service processes all planning applications in an equitable way and strives to process them as expeditiously as possible. It also encourages early contact from and discussions with leader/partnership groups and their agents so that proposals for which EU grant-aid is available are not held up because of potential planning difficulties.

Genitourinary Medicine

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what incentives are being used to aid recruitment of junior medical staff into genitourinary medicine. [206120]

Angela Smith: I am not aware of any difficulties in recruiting junior doctors into genitourinary medicine. However, the Department is aware of recruitment difficulties to non-consultant career grade posts. I refer the hon. Lady to the answer I gave on 10 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 788W.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) whether departmental special advisers have been responsible for authorising instances of departmental spending since May 1997; [203923]

(2) whether departmental special advisers have given instructions to permanent civil servants without the explicit authorisation of Ministers since May 1997. [203965]

Mr. Paul Murphy: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Minister for the Cabinet Office on 16 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1258W.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether departmental special advisers have written to external *(a)* bodies and *(b)* individuals in their official capacity since May 1997. [204293]

Mr. Paul Murphy: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 14 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1004W.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether departmental special advisers have made appearances before parliamentary select committees in their official capacity since May 1997. [204313]

Mr. Paul Murphy: I can confirm that no special advisers employed in the Northern Ireland Office have done so since 1997.

HOME DEPARTMENT

2 Marsham Street

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which cable and satellite channels the new Home Office buildings in 2 Marsham Street will receive. [205350]

Mr. Charles Clarke: Terrestrial channels, Sky package, Parliamentary Channel and Palace Annunciator.

Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy

Mr. Francois: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects the new corporate social responsibility scheme proposed under the Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy to commence. [206551]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 21 December 2004]:* We have sent an initial outline of the content of the social responsibility scheme to the main trade associations and asked for comments by 10 December. We will be working closely with the trade associations on the detailed drafting of the code of practice throughout January, and aim to issue it for wider consultation in mid February. Discussions around the financial contributions will be taken forward separately, and we aim to work up a proposal for consultation with the industry early in the new year. We aim to have the bulk of the scheme in place by April, although there will be some aspects which will take longer to implement.

Mr. Francois: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects the consultation period relating to the corporate social responsibility scheme of the Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy to end. [206552]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 21 December 2004]:* We have sent an initial outline of the content of the social responsibility scheme to the main trade associations and asked for comments by 10 December. We will be working closely with the trade associations on the detailed drafting of the code of practice throughout January, and aim to issue it for wider consultation in mid February. Discussions around the financial contributions will be taken forward separately, and we aim to work up a proposal for consultation with the industry early in the new year. We aim to have the bulk of the scheme in place by April, although there will be some aspects which will take longer to implement.

Asylum Seekers

Ms Abbott: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many children of asylum seekers were being detained in the UK on *(a)* 1 October 2003 and *(b)* 1 October 2004. [206244]

Mr. Browne: Information on the number of children of asylum seekers detained as at 1 October 2003 and 1 October 2004 is not available.

The latest available information shows that as at 25 September 2004, 40 of the people detained solely under Immigration Act powers were recorded as being under 18.

This information is unavailable for end September 2003 since publication of this series commenced in early 2004 and related to children held as at 27 December 2003.

Information on the number of people detained solely under Immigration Act powers as at 25 December 2004 will be published on the Home Office website on 22 February 2005 www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html.

Ms Abbott: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the mean length of time children of asylum seekers spent in detention in the 12 months to November. [206247]

Mr. Browne: Information on the mean length of time that children are detained solely under Immigration Act powers over a period of time is not available. It would be available by examination of individual cases files only at disproportionate cost.

The latest available information shows that as at 25 September 2004, 40 people who were detained solely under Immigration Act powers were recorded as being under 18 years old.

Information on the number of people detained solely under Immigration Act powers as at 25 December 2004 will be published on the Home Office website on 22 February 2005 www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html.

Ms Abbott: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps the Government are taking to monitor the reintegration of failed asylum seekers who have been returned to their country of origin. [206249]

Mr. Browne: Each asylum claim is considered on its own merits taking account of relevant country information, caselaw and factors specific to the individual claim. Where a decision has been taken that an individual would not be at risk if returned to their country and that decision has been upheld by the appellate authorities we consider that it is safe for that individual to be removed.

We do not consider it necessary to monitor the reintegration of failed asylum seekers who have been removed in accordance with the proper procedures. However, for those who wish to return voluntarily, the International Organisation for Migration arranges reintegration assistance which can consist of access to initial housing, facilitating access to employment, training opportunities, education and health services.

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many unaccompanied minors claiming asylum in England have been placed under the care of local authority social services in each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [206702]

Mr. Browne *[holding answer 21 December 2004]:* The information requested is not available. The table shows total number of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children who applied for asylum in the United Kingdom.

Unaccompanied children[1, 2, 3] aged 17 or under, applying for asylum in the UK, 1997 to 2003

	Number of principal applicants
1997	1,105
1998	3,035
1999[4]	3,350
2000[4]	2,735
2001[4]	3,470
2002[5]	6,200
2003[5, 6]	3,180

[1] Figures are rounded to the nearest 5.

[2] Unaccompanied at point of arrival, aged (or if no proof) determined to be 17 or under and not known to be joining a relative or guardian in the United Kingdom.

[3] Figures exclude disputed age cases.

[4] May exclude some cases lodged at Local Enforcement Offices.

[5] Not comparable with manual counts data prior to 2002.

[6] Provisional figures.

While awaiting the outcome of their asylum claims unaccompanied asylum seeking minors are not entitled to state benefits and are supported under the Children Act 1989 with maintenance and accommodation being provided by Social Services Departments of the Local Authorities. Information on asylum applications and removals are published quarterly on the Home Office website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html.

Building Regulations

Ms Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prosecutions have been brought in each year since 2000 for breach of building regulations. [205484]

Paul Goggins: It is not possible from the statistics collected centrally on the Home Office court proceedings database to separately identify those defendants proceeded against for breach of building regulations from other offences under the Building Act 1984.

However, the number of defendants proceeded against for various offences under the Building Act 1984 are shown in the following table.

Number of defendants proceeded against at magistrates courts for offences under the Building Act 1984. England and Wales 2000 to 2003[1]

		Proceeded against			
Offence description	*Principal statute*	*2000[2]*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
Various offences related to building regulations including breach of building regulations	Building Act 1984 SS 3.19, 23, 25, 35, 61, 68, 72, 77, 85, 96, 99 and 112	148	105	100	95
Public Health Offences related to Building Act 1984—various offences	Building Act 1984 SS 11, 52, 63, 73, 74	8	14	3	10
Other summary offences[3]	Building Act 1984 sec. 71(4)	[4]—	[4]—	[4]—	[4]—
Other indictable offences	Building Act 1984 sec. 57	4	—	—	—

[1] These data are on a principle offence basis.

[2] Staffordshire police force were only able to submit sample data for persons proceeded against and convicted in the magistrates courts for the year 2000. Although sufficient to estimate higher orders of data, these data are not robust enough at a detailed level and have been excluded from the table.

[3] Persons proceeded against for other summary offences under the Building Act 1984 cannot be separately identified on the Home Office court proceedings database as they form part of a miscellaneous group which cannot be analysed.

[4] Not available.

Statistics for 2004 will be available in autumn 2005.

CCTV (Ports of Entry)

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many CCTV cameras there are at UK ports of entry; and for how long data on CCTV cameras at UK ports of entry is kept. [204446]

Mr. Browne: The UK Immigration Service is one of several authorities, who use CCTV cameras at UK ports of entry. The following information details CCTV cameras used solely by the Immigration Service.

The Immigration Service operates cameras at Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted airports. These are situated at key locations to record both arriving and departing passengers. Details of how many cameras are in operation at ports of entry and the data retention cannot be released, as this would compromise border control operations.

In addition to the systems operated solely by the Immigration Service access is provided at other locations by the port operators to their local systems.

Child Deaths (State Custody)

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make it his policy to hold a public inquiry in every case where the death of a child in state custody occurs; and if he will make a statement. [207212]

Paul Goggins: Deaths of children in custody are rare. When they do occur we have carefully formulated arrangements for finding out the facts and drawing lessons from them. The Youth Justice Board conducts its own serious incident review, and this feeds into a wider inquiry conducted by the local Area Child Protection Committee. Where a young person was detained in a Young Offender Institution , the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman conducts an investigation. We propose to legislate at the next available opportunity to place the Ombudsman on a statutory footing, equipping him with statutory powers of investigation and extending his remit to investigate deaths to secure training centres. Any death in a local authority Secure Children's Home is investigated by the Commission for Social Care Inspection.

In addition, Article 2 of the European Convention on Human Rights requires a public investigation. This is normally met by an inquest. In two important Article 2 cases this year, the House of Lords has specified how inquests can meet the procedural requirements of Article 2.

Circles Programme

Dr. Kumar To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department where the Circles programme has been introduced; what assessment he has made of its effects; and what plans there are to introduce it elsewhere. [201498]

Paul Goggins: Circles of Support and Accountability are being run in the Thames Valley and Hampshire areas. In addition the Lucy Faithfull Foundation are operating in a number of areas using Circles, initially to support former residents of the Wolvercote Clinic.

The Home Office is in the process of evaluating the scheme and a report is due in March 2005. This report will help to inform any future expansion of the scheme.

Contracted Prisons

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) when he will publish cost and statistical data on the performance of each contracted prison against key performance indicators; and if he will make a statement; [200966]

(2) when he will publish the Annual Report and Accounts for the office of contracted prisons for 2003–04. [200967]

Paul Goggins: Information on key performance indicators for contracted prisons was included in the written ministerial statement I made on 21 July 2004, *Official Report*, column 42WS.

I am also able to provide a list of costs and related information for contracted prisons following the publication of the Home Office Accounts.

	Certified normal accommodation	*Average population*	*Expenditure (£)*	*Cost per prison place (£)*	*Cost per prisoner (£)*
Altcourse	614	996	32,739,936	53,322	32,871
Ashfield	407	278	13,662,084	33,568	49,144
Doncaster	771	1,110	19,097,051	24,769	17,205
Dovegate	860	849	23,584,223	27,424	27,779
Forest Bank	800	1004	21,783,463	27,229	21 ,697
Lowdham Grange	504	522	13,004,116	25,802	24,912
Pare	788	980	32,529,421	41,281	33,193
Rye Hill	600	656	14,935,111	24,892	22,767
Wolds	310	344	6,776,755	21,861	19,700
Total	5,654	6,739	178,112,160	31,502	26,430

The office for contracted prisons is not required to publish an Annual Report or Accounts as it is part of the main Home Office and not an Agency.

Correspondence

Mr. Wilshire: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will reply to the letter of 8 October from the hon. Member for Spelthorne, about a constituent, Mr. P. Duckworth. [203570]

Mr. Browne *[holding answer 9 December 2004]:* I wrote to the hon. Member on 11 January. The delay in responding was due to the letter being addressed to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and only being transferred to the Home Office after the hon. Member tabled his question.

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when his officials at the Immigration and Nationality Directorate will reply to the letter of 10 March about a constituent of the hon. Member for Vauxhall, Home Office reference: W1009436. [205261]

Mr. Browne: The Immigration and Nationality Directorate wrote to my hon. Friend on 5 January 2005.

Crime Statistics (York)

Hugh Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* burglaries of dwellings, *(b)* vehicle crimes, *(c)* crimes in total and *(d)* arrests there were in the City of York between (i) April and December 2004 and (ii) April and December 2003; what the detection rate was in each category in these periods; and what the percentage change in each was between the two periods. [205948]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 10 January 2005]*: Information on the number of recorded offences for the City of York relates to the York Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) area. Statistics at CDRP level are only published on a calendar basis. Figures covering 2002–03 and 2003–04 are available on the Home Office website at:

http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs04/cdrptabs.xls

Detections data is available at Basic Command Unit (BCU) level but not at CDRP level. The City of York comes within the Central BCU and the statistics are only published on a calendar year basis. They are available on the website at:

http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs04/bcu1.xls

Arrests data is only collected at police force area level and by offence group only.

Custody Plus

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what additional funds will be made available to the prisons and probation services to implement custody plus; and when the measure will be implemented. [205686]

Paul Goggins: Implementation of the custody plus provisions will be funded from within the Department's spending review settlement. No final decision has yet been taken on the timing of commencement of these provisions.

Domestic Violence

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the contribution of local Women's Aid and other refuge services to the effectiveness of other agency responses to domestic violence, with particular reference to advocacy services. [206042]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 20 December 2004]*: The Crime Reduction Programme (CRP) Violence against Women Initiative (VAWI) was an evidence based programme which aimed to find out which approaches and strategies were effective in supporting victims and tackling violence against women. In July 2000 27 domestic violence projects and seven rape and sexual assault projects were independently evaluated. The domestic violence projects were all multi-agency partnerships and many of the partner organisations involved in delivering interventions were voluntary groups such as Women's Aid. The projects worked in a variety of contexts and, while most provided some type of advocacy and support, the aims of the projects differed. The findings from the evaluations have been collated, and a series of research reports and concise practitioner guides have already been published. The research findings from those projects which specifically provided advocacy and support to victims are planned to be published, along with two concise practitioner guides, early in 2005.

The evidence of the CRP VAWI—and recent evaluations of specialist domestic violence courts which make clear that advocacy services are a key part in their success—show the important role advocacy services have to play in supporting victims of domestic violence. Local partnerships responsible for crime and disorder are currently Identifying the need for domestic violence services in their local communities. Once identified, the appropriate organisation to meet that need is selected by local commissioning groups and their effectiveness monitored against criteria set out in their service level agreements.

Environment Department Buildings

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much was spent from public funds on maintaining the offices of the former Department of the Environment buildings from the time it ceased to be working departmental offices to its demolition. [205351]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The Home Office took on responsibilities for the management and repair of the 2 Marsham Street buildings on 1 April 1999. The building was also used as a shelter for the homeless during one winter. The maintenance costs required to keep the building and site safe from 1 April 1999 to the commencement of demolition on 27 March 2002 was £1.7 million excluding VAT.

Erkin Guney

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether Mr. Roy Clark, formerly of the Independent Police Complaints Commission, has been excluded from participation in, or oversight of, the inquiry into the conduct of the police in relation to the wrongful conviction of Erkin Guney; and if he will make a statement. [205534]

Ms Blears: Roy Clarke is the present Director of Investigations at the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) and I am advised that he has not participated in any way in the investigation into the conduct of the police in relation to the conviction of Erkin Guney.

The IPCC has advised that it will always take care to avoid the involvement of any Commissioner or member of staff in a case on its behalf who has had previous involvement in cases which might raise a conflict of interest.

Female Prisoners

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average reconviction rate of female prisoners was in each year since 1997. [206281]

Paul Goggins: The most recent data is given in the table, which shows the percentage of females who were reconvicted of standard list offences within two years of discharge from prison.

Table 1: Rate of reconvictions of female prisoners

	Reconviction rate (percentage)
2001	57
2000	54
1999	55
1998	52
1997	51

The probability that a discharged prisoner will be reconvicted is strongly associated with a number of factors including age and previous criminal history. The reconviction rates reported for prison discharges have not been adjusted to take into account any changes over time in the characteristics of offenders being given prison sentences.

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many female vulnerable prisoner units there are. [206328]

Paul Goggins: There are no vulnerable prisoner units (VPU) in the female estate as the number of female sex offenders is too small for an estate-wide VPU scheme. While vulnerable women prisoners may be separated from other prisoners for periods of time, the general aim is to reintegrate them into normal prison life as soon as possible and give them support to do so.

Fines

Mr. Gerrard: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will introduce a new unit fines system. [206145]

Paul Goggins: The Management of Offenders and Sentencing Bill will contain provisions for a day fine scheme. The proposed scheme will provide a statutory method for calculating fines based upon the seriousness of the offence, measured in terms of the number of days imposed, multiplied by the financial value given to each day based on the offender's disposable income. The aim is to provide for greater consistency and fairness so that fines bear more equally on offenders of differing means.

Mr. Gerrard: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make it his policy to ensure that imprisonment cannot be a penalty for non-payment of a fine where imprisonment could not have been imposed as a penalty for the original offence. [206146]

Paul Goggins: Within the broad statutory limits set by Parliament, sentences in individual cases are a matter for the courts alone, taking into account all the circumstances of the offence and the offender. The Government believes that prison sentences should be reserved for those who are either serious, dangerous or seriously persistent offenders. Equally, offenders cannot expect to go unpunished if they fail to pay a fine.

The court may issue a warrant of commitment: if the offender has failed to pay a fine and the court has, since the conviction, enquired into the defaulter's means in his presence on at least one occasion; in the case of an offence punishable with imprisonment, the defaulter appears to the court to have sufficient means to pay the sum forthwith; or the court is satisfied that the default is due to the defaulter's wilful refusal or culpable neglect and the court has considered or tried all other means of enforcing payment of the sum and it appears to the court that they are inappropriate or unsuccessful.

The Courts Act 2004 introduced a number of measures short of imprisonment that could be imposed on offenders in order to enforce fine payment. These include vehicle clamping, credit blacklisting and work for the community. These measures are currently being piloted.

Gangmasters

Geraldine Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the terms were of the proposal which he submitted to the Department of Trade and Industry relating to regulation of gangmasters prior to the Morecambe Bay cockling tragedy. [206084]

Mr. Browne *[holding answer 20 December 2004]*: During the latter half of 2003, the former Home Secretary my right hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield, Brightside (Mr. Blunkett) raised with colleagues in other Departments, including the Department for Trade and Industry, his general concerns about the role of some labour suppliers in encouraging the use of illegal migrant labour and in breaching other legislation. These discussions took place as part of the normal process of formulating Government policy, and included the possibility of legislative action. The option to introduce measures in the Bill that became the Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants, etc.) Act 2004 was raised, but a consensus was subsequently reached to support the private Member's Bill introduced by my hon. Friend, the Member for West Renfrewshire (Jim Sheridan).

Identity Cards

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the working groups which are tasked with taking forward work on *(a)* identity cards and *(b)* biometrics. [206619]

Mr. Browne: The Identity Cards Programme has a governance structure involving a number of groups both interdepartmental and internal to the Home Office. The groups are: the Strategy Board, Programme Board, Transition Planning Project Board, Principal Users Group and Home Office Multilateral. The Programme is also working closely with key private sector stakeholders who are forming a private sector user group to contribute to the design and development of the scheme.

Associated groups taking forward work on biometric technology are: the Home Office Strategic Identification Systems Group, Inter-departmental Group on Strategic Identification Systems, UK Passport Service Biometrics Trial Programme Board, Immigration Biometric Identification Programme Board, and Immigration and Nationality Biometrics Co-ordination and Strategy Steering Group. A Biometrics Assurance Group under Sir David King Government Chief Scientific Advisor is being established to provide peer review.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what arrangements he plans for *(a)* supply of and *(b)* charging for identity cards for (i) vagrants, (ii) homeless people, (iii) travellers, (iv) mentally ill people after discharge and (v) prisoners on release. [207026]

Mr. Browne: The Government are clear about the need to ensure those who may have difficulty in obtaining a card are dealt with sympathetically. There is therefore provision in the Identity Cards Bill for regulations to make different requirements for different cases, with exemptions and exceptions.

In developing the detailed processes for the supply of cards to people in these groups, we will carefully examine their specific needs and look to adopt good practice identified by other Government Departments. As part of designing an inclusive scheme, we have also included powers in the Bill to set different levels of fees for identity cards for different circumstances. The final decision on the fee structure and levels of fees will be for Parliament under the powers in clause 37 of the Bill.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether it will be an offence not to produce an identity card to authenticate the exchange of information required for car collisions. [207027]

Mr. Browne: It will not be an offence to fail to produce an identity card in these circumstances. Clause 15 (3) of the Identity Cards Bill makes it clear that there will be no future requirement to carry a card. An identity card may be used voluntarily in the circumstances described above, as a proof of identity. It will not however contain any information which relates to the holder's entitlement to drive.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether *(a)* financial institutions, *(b)* shops and *(c)* restaurants will be entitled to (i) demand to see identity cards as proof of identity, (ii) check the authenticity of cards produced and (iii) call in the police to check cards in the event of disputes. [207028]

Mr. Browne: The Identity Cards Bill which received its second reading in the House of Commons on 20 December 2004 contains no such provisions.

Clause 18 of the Bill prohibits any organisation from requiring the production of an identity card as the sole means of proving identity in advance of it being compulsory to register with the scheme. Even after compulsion, there is no means within the Bill to provide powers to private sector organisations to demand the production of an identity card.

In the event that a fraudulent card is found to be in use, the Identity Cards Bill creates new offences relating to possession of a false identity document. This provides that a person in possession of a false identity card with the intention of using it, may be guilty of an offence and liable to a maximum penalty of 10 years imprisonment.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the percentage of identity cards likely to be lost or stolen each year. [207029]

Mr. Browne: The current working assumption is that in any one year 2 per cent. of card holders will lose their card or have it stolen. This is a higher rate than currently applies for passports.

Identity Fraud

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the work of the Passport Service to reduce identity fraud. [206614]

Mr. Browne: As indicated in its 2004–09 Corporate and Business Plan, the UK Passport Service is taking forward a range of initiatives to reduce identity fraud through strengthened identity authentication and improved fraud detection and prevention. The Passport Service's programme of work which has been informed by, and is closely related to the recommendations of the Cabinet Office study on identity fraud published in 2002, includes:

Increasing data-sharing with public and private sector organisations;

Requiring applicants applying for their first passports to attend for personal interview;

Improving systems and staff training in identity authentication, and increasing the professionalism of its fraud investigation capability;

Improving the security of the passport book, through the introduction of biometric chip enabled passports from autumn 2005;

Using facial recognition technology to detect fraudulent applications;

Use of its new Omnibase, and Lost/Stolen/Recovered global passport databases to detect and prevent fraud;

Working with law enforcement agencies to apprehend, disrupt and dismantle the activities of those involved in identity fraud; and

Supporting the work of the Home Office's Identity Fraud Steering Committee in promoting closer public/private sector collaboration in combating identity fraud.

Announcing on 27 October our decision in principle to establish a new Executive Agency to issue identity cards starting in 2008.

This Agency would incorporate the functions of the UK Passport Service. Implementation of its planned programme of work, including all of the above actions and projects to reduce identity fraud, would act as building blocks for a future ID card enrolment network and system, and smooth the introduction of secure biometric ID cards and the national identity register, assuming the relevant legislation is enacted by Parliament.

Immigration Offences

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* prosecutions and *(b)* convictions have been secured in each of the last four quarters for which data is available for offences under section 8 of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996. [206884]

Paul Goggins: The information contained in the table gives the number of defendants proceeded against and found guilty at all courts for offences under the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996, Section 8, England and Wales 2003.

Number of defendants proceeded against at magistrates' courts and found guilty at all courts[1] under the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996, Sec 8, England and Wales 2003

Quarter	*Proceeded against*	*Found guilty*
January to March	—	—
April to June	1	1
July to September	—	—
October to December	1	—
Total	2	1

[1] These data are on the principal immigration offence basis.

IND Case

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when officials at the Immigration and Nationality Directorate will resolve the immigration status of a constituent of the hon. Member for Vauxhall, reference number: A530709. [203534]

Mr. Browne: A Senior Director of Operations in the Immigration Nationality Directorate sent an interim reply to my hon. Friend on 9 December 2004.

Muslim Prisoners

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* female and *(b)* male prisoners who classify themselves as Muslims are held in each prison service establishment in England and Wales. [199535]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 29 November 2004]:* The information requested, as recorded on the Prison Service central IT system on 31 October 2004, is provided in the table.

Population of Muslim prisoners, by gender and establishment England and Wales, 31 October 2004

	Males	*Females*
All	6,758	146
Acklington	18	0
Albany	23	0
Altcourse	33	0
Ashfield	6	0
Ashwell	64	0
Askham Grange	0	2
Aylesbury	55	0
Bedford	46	0
Belmarsh	132	0
Birmingham	193	0
Blakenhurst	71	0
Blantyre House	8	0
Blundeston	74	0
Brinsford	62	0

Population of Muslim prisoners, by gender and establishment England and Wales, 31 October 2004

	Males	*Females*
Bristol	33	0
Brixton	170	0
Brockhill	0	6
Bronzefield	0	7
Buckley Hall	0	4
Bullingdon	115	0
Bullwood Hall	0	11
Camp Hill	67	0
Canterbury	11	0
Cardiff	38	0
Castington	8	0
Channings Wood	30	0
Chelmsford	40	0
Coldingly	43	0
Cookham Wood	0	4
Dartmoor	23	0
Deerbolt	21	0
Doncaster	99	0
Dorchester	12	0
Dovegate	124	0
Dover	113	0
Downview	0	9
Drake Hall	0	8
Durham	15	0
East Sutton Park	0	9
Eastwood Park	0	5
Edmunds Hill	0	1
Elmley	74	0
Erlestoke	35	0
Everthorpe	46	0
Exeter	140	0
Featherstone	77	0
Feltham	153	0
Ford	53	0
Forest Bank	85	0
Foston Hall	0	16
Frankland	50	0
Full Sutton	78	0
Garth	70	0
Gartree	32	0
Glen Parva	41	0
Gloucester	10	0
Grendon (Spring Hill)	77	0
Guys Marsh	34	0
Haslar	44	0
Haverigg	30	0
Hewell Grange	22	0
Highdown	69	0
Highpoint	90	0
Hindley	42	0
Hollesley Bay (Warren Hill)	28	0
Holloway	0	19
Holme House	26	0
Hull	27	0
Huntercombe	47	0
Kingston (Portsmouth)	7	0
Kirkham	36	0
Kirklevington	16	0
Lancaster	3	0
Lancaster Farms	21	0
Latchmere House	35	0
Leeds	161	0
Leicester	38	0
Lewes	13	0
Leyhill	47	0
Lincoln	15	0
Lindholme	105	0
Littlehey	48	0
Liverpool	63	0
Long Lartin	70	0
Low Newton	0	3
Lowdham Grange	61	0
Maidstone	50	0
Manchester	120	0
Moorland	93	0
Moorland Open	30	0
Morton Hall	0	9
Mount	117	0
New Hall	0	12
North Sea Camp	26	0
Northallerton	11	0
Norwich	60	0
Nottingham	37	0
Onley	53	0
Pare	26	0
Parkhurst	45	0
Pentonville	221	0
Portland	93	0
Preston	46	0
Ranby	54	0
Reading	22	0
Risley	75	0
Rochester	58	0
Rye Hill	104	0
Send	0	14
Shepton Mallet	12	0
Shrewsbury	17	0
Stafford	55	0
Standford Hill	44	0
Stocken	42	0
Stoke Heath	32	0
Styal	0	9
Sudbury	69	0
Swaleside	139	0
Swansea	5	0
Swinfen Hall	46	0
Thorn Cross	38	0
Usk (Frescoed)	14	0
Verne	58	0
Wakefield	30	0
Wandsworth	206	0
Warren Hill	21	0
Wayland	76	0
Wealstun	70	0
Weare	20	0
Wellingborough	43	0
Werrington	9	0
Wetherby	18	0
Whatton	22	0
Whitemoor	78	0
Winchester	17	0
Wolds	29	0
Woodhill	105	0
Wormwood Scrubs	205	0
Wymott	60	0

Oakington Reception Centre

Ms Abbott: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what provisions are in place to ensure that staff at Oakington Reception Centre obtain senior level authorisation before detaining children.

[206242]

Mr. Browne: The initial detention of all applicants, including families with children, accepted for transfer to Oakington Reception Centre is authorised at the appropriate level prior to their transfer to the Centre by the detaining port, local enforcement office (LEO) or Asylum Screening Unit (ASU).

Following the transfer of any family to Oakington for their application to be considered, detention is reviewed within 48 hours by the Assistant Director or by an Inspector in her absence.

Passports

Mr. Lilley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of the British population has a passport. [206143]

Mr. Browne *[holding answer 20 December 2004]:* As at the end of November 2004, the proportion of the UK population that holds a valid passport is between 72 per cent. and 81 per cent. of the resident population.

Police Administrative Staff

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department in which police forces administrative staff working for police forces receive the same pay entitlement with regard to working on public holidays as police officers. [206216]

Ms Blears: Neither the Home Office nor the Employers Organisation routinely collects this information. Pay and conditions of service for police staff are set by local police authorities.

Press Officers

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many press officers are employed in the Department. [206533]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Department currently employs 39 Press Officers. (Press Officers within the Home Office are employed at the Information Officer (IO) and Senior Information Officer (SIO) grades.)

Prison and Probation Services

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list properties and assets that are *(a)* owned and *(b)* used by (i) HM Prison Service and (ii) the probation service; and what value is attributed to each asset. [206418]

Paul Goggins: Details of prison and probation service properties and assets and their valuations could only be provided at disproportionate costs. The prison estate is valued in excess of £5 billion on a depreciated replacement cost basis and the probation service has property listing values in excess of £132 million.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether all appraisals into the options for achieving better quality services at optimal cost for the Prison Service since 1997 have fully complied with Government guidance on Better Quality Services. [201015]

Paul Goggins: The Prison Service has undertaken four Better Quality Services (BQS) Reviews. These reviewed the following activities:

Construction Unit;

Escort Contracts;

Works Departments (prison maintenance units); and

Security Group.

The BQS policy required the following options to be considered as part of each review:

Abolish;

Restructure internally;

Strategically contract out;

Market test; and

Privatise.

In all cases, the reviews complied with the guidance on Better Quality Services.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what appraisals have been conducted into the options for achieving better quality services at optimal cost for the Prison Service since 1997; when they were commissioned; who carried them out; when they were completed; if he will publish them; and if he will make a statement. [201020]

Paul Goggins: The Prison Service has undertaken four Better Quality Services (BQS) Reviews. These reviewed the following activities:

Construction Unit

Prisoner Escort Contracts

Works Departments (prison maintenance units)

Security Group

The Construction Unit BQS Review was commissioned in April 2002 and completed January 2003. External consultants were engaged to undertake this review.

The Prisoner Escort Contract BQS Review was commissioned in September 1999 and completed May 2002. External consultants were engaged to undertake this review.

The Works Departments BQS Review was commissioned in early 1999 and the review findings were approved in June 2000. The review was carried out by both Prison Service staff and external consultants.

The Security Group BQS Review was commissioned in February 2000 and completed June 2000. The review was carried out by both Prison Service staff resource and external consultants.

It is not the intention to publish the reviews, as they were not developed with an external audience in mind and require prior knowledge of both the function concerned and the wider Prison Service. However, the working papers will be available on request.

The formal BQS approach ceased to be mandatory in 2002 following a Cabinet Office Review. However, the Prison Service remains committed to the principles outlined in the BQS approach is taking forward a comprehensive programme of value for money initiatives.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much the Prison Service has spent defending equal pay employment tribunal cases in each year since 1997. [201065]

Paul Goggins: On 9 September 2004 the Prison Service had spent £1,034,741 since 1997 on equal pay tribunal cases. In view of the unresolved and continuing nature of most of these cases, it is not possible to provide an accurate breakdown for each year without incurring disproportionate cost.

Prisoner Escape (Stafford)

[illegible]. Kidney: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the escape of three prisoners from Stafford Prison on 8 December. [204669]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 14 December 2004]:* Three prisoners escaped from Stafford prison at approximately 16:00 hrs on 8 December 2004. The prisoners had gained access to a workshop roof from where they were able to escape. The prisoners were spotted in the vicinity of the prison by an off duty prison officer. A full roll check confirmed their absence and the incident was immediately reported to the police.

One of the prisoners was recaptured by police on 9 December and a second on 10 December. One remains unlawfully at large. The two prisoners who have been recaptured are each serving seven years for robbery.

The third is serving three years and six months for burglary. All are Category C prisoners. An internal investigation into the incident is currently under way.

Prisoners

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners there are, broken down by category of offence. [203531]

Paul Goggins: The information requested, as recorded on the Prison Service central IT system on 31 October 2004, is provided in the table.

Population in prison establishments, by offence group and custody type, England and Wales, 31 October 2004

	Remand	*Immediate custodial sentence*	*Fine defaulters*	*Civil prisoners*	*Total population*
Total	12,229	61,321	72	1,091	74,713
Violence against the person	2,672	14,424	—	—	—
Sexual offences	650	5,931	—	—	—
Robbery	1,045	8,435	—	—	—
Burglary	1,492	8,498	—	—	—
Theft and Handling	1,327	4,337	—	—	—
Fraud and Forgery	325	1,169	—	—	—
Drugs offence	1,597	10,443	—	—	—
Motoring offences	335	2,414	—	—	—
Other offences	1,703	4,928	—	—	—
Offence not recorded	1,084	742	—	—	—

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average distance in miles between *(a)* female and *(b)* male prison location and the registered home address of the inmate was in the last period for which figures are available. [206279]

Paul Goggins: A prisoner's home area is defined as their home address on their reception into prison. For prisoners with no address, the address of the relevant committal court is used as the home address.

As at September 2004 (the latest period for which figures are available), the average distance female prisoners were held from their home or committal court address was 62 miles. Male prisoners were held an average of 51 miles from their home or committal court address.

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of babies born in prison remained with their mothers up to the age of nine months in the last year for which figures are available. [206286]

Paul Goggins: Information in the form requested is not available centrally. All pregnant prisoners who give birth to a baby while serving a prison sentence do so in a local hospital. Whether the mother then keeps the child with her in prison is partly a matter for her choice and partly a matter for social services. The Prison Service provides places on mother and baby units and those mothers who wish to keep their child with them and are considered suitable may do so up to about the age of 18 months depending on what is in the best interests of the child. At 13 December 2004 there were 51 mothers in those units and their children's ages ranged from a few weeks to 16 months.

Prisons

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* women and *(b)* men were being held in prison on 12 March; how many prisoners were released on early release on 12 March; how many prisoners were eligible for early release on 12 March; and how many prisoners were released on 12 March. [201032]

Paul Goggins: On 12 March 2004 there were 4,569 females and 70,451 males being held in Prison Service establishments in England and Wales. There were an estimated 175 prisoners with a sentence length of three months to less than four years whose Home Detention Curfew (HDC) eligibility date was 12 March 2004. On that date, 77 prisoners were actually released on HDC.

Some prisoners with a sentence length of three months to less than four years do not quality for HDC because of the nature of their current or previous offences.

In addition, the figure of 175 will exclude a small number of prisoners in the population who were on remand at the time of the count, but were subsequently sentenced to a custodial sentence suitable for HOC and whose HOC eligibility date falls on 12 March 2004. This occurs when they have spent a significant period on remand.

A further 623 prisoners were discharged by other means on 12 March 2004, not including discharges following recall after release on licence, fine defaulters and non-criminals.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prison officers and staff were waiting on 6 December for results from a test for tuberculosis. [203713]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 13 December 2004]:* This information is not held centrally and can be obtained only at a disproportionate cost.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many *(a)* prison officers and *(b)* staff are waiting for the results of a test for hepatitis C following an incident in prison in which they were injured as at 7 December; [204619]

(2) how many *(a)* prison officers and *(b)* staff have (i) been tested for hepatitis C and (ii) tested positive for hepatitis C following an incident in which they were injured in each year since January 1997 and from 1 January to 1 December 2004. [204620]

Paul Goggins: This information is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what funding has been made available to prison governors for the implementation of the Prisons Alcohol Strategy. [206616]

Paul Goggins: The Prison Service has now launched a comprehensive Alcohol Strategy for prisoners. The Strategy follows closely the Government's Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy and complements both our existing Drug Strategy and the wider programme of resettlement activity. The Strategy will be implemented within existing funding settlements.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will establish a multi-disciplinary project team to review fire safety risks in prison cells. [200931]

Paul Goggins: The Building Research Establishment Fire Section was commissioned as an independent specialist body in September 2004 to survey and review fire safety issues across the prison estate, concentrating primarily on fire safety risks in prison cells.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what account the Prison Service takes of the likelihood of *(a)* vandalism and *(b)* attempted suicides when making decisions on the installation of sprinklers in prisons and detention centres. [200932]

Paul Goggins: Any decisions on the installation of sprinklers for cellular accommodation in prisons would take into account safety factors such as the risk of self-harm and the potential for vandalism as well as overall cost effectiveness. If sprinklers were introduced design features would need to minimise the risk of sprinkler heads being used as ligature points. The installation of sprinklers in immigration removal centres will be considered by the Immigration and Nationality Department on a case-by-case basis.

Probation Service

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what factors determined *(a)* the level of pay rise included in the Probation Service's budget for 2004–05 and *(b)* the level of pay rises awarded to Probation Service staff in 2004–05. [203638]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 9 December 2004]:* The information is as follows:

(a) A provisional figure of 3.5 per cent. was allocated in the 2004–05 Probation Area budgets. This was in the expectation that pay modernisation proposals, which would have included an annual pay award, would be successfully negotiated and implemented with an effective date of 1 April 2004. It was considered that 3.5 per cent. would be likely to fall within Her Majesty's Treasury guidelines, as it contained both an annual pay award and the introduction of a new, modernised pay system.

(b) A final offer of a 2.7 per cent. annual pay award has been made with effect from 1 April 2004. The determining factors were the cost threshold under Her Majesty's Treasury guidelines, affordability and reasonableness. This offer is in addition to the provision for annual incremental progression paid to staff from 1 April 2004. This offer is the subject of continuing negotiations with Probation Service Trade Unions.

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he plans to monitor the performance of the probation service against outcomes. [205687]

Paul Goggins: The National Offender Management Service (NOMS) will be judged on its success in delivering the target of a five per cent reduction in re-offending by 2007–08, leading to a 10 per cent. reduction by the end of the decade.

Within that framework, the probation service is currently judged by a range of different measures. These include the number of offenders completing cognitive skills programmes designed to tackle offending behaviour and the number of offenders gaining basic educational qualifications, as well as the number of offenders who successfully comply with the terms of their order. We will further develop the range of measures as part of the introduction of the offender-focused management being developed by NOMS.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment has been carried out of the 2001 national probation service reforms. [205709]

Paul Goggins: The changes introduced by the Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2000 and implemented from April 2001 were overseen by the Director General of the National Probation Service (NPS) based within the Home Office.

The overall three year change programme was set out in a strategic document, "A New Choreography". The Office of Government Commerce independently reviewed the initial programme in October 2001. They commended the restructure and noted early performance improvements.

Since 2001, service-wide performance improvements have continued and these are monitored in regular quarterly NPS performance reports, which have been made publicly available since March 2003.

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Probation—who reports independently to Ministers on the work and performance of the NPS—has covered a number of issues relevant to the restructuring, such as governance, probation officer training, race equality and IT in recent reports. The Inspectorate's Effective Supervision Inspection programme examines the quality and effectiveness of work by probation areas in the NPS. All Inspectorate reports are published.

Refugees

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the number of refugees residing in each parliamentary constituency. [205112]

Mr. Browne: The information is not available in the form requested. Data on how many persons granted indefinite leave to remain that live in each parliamentary constituency is not available and could be produced only at a disproportionate cost.

Rights of Residency

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the effect of European Court of Justice case C-200/02, reference OJ C300 volume 47, of 4 December on rights of residency in the UK for non-UK citizens in equivalent circumstances to those who are the subject of that case; and how many individuals with UK-based families are thereby affected. [207257]

Mr. Browne: The ECJ ruled in case C200/02 on 19 October 2004 that an EEA national child would have a right to reside in the UK with his or her non-EEA national parent provided that the parent has sufficient income to ensure that the child held appropriate sickness insurance and would not become a burden on public funds.

The court did not accept that the parent's right to reside was unconditional or that those family members residing with the child would have a right to work or access public funds.

The number of people obtaining residency rights on the basis of this ruling is unlikely to be significant. An amendment to the immigration rules enabling those benefiting from the ruling to obtain leave to enter or remain in the United Kingdom was laid on 20 December and came into force on 1 January 2005. Those obtaining leave on this basis will have no right to take up employment or access public funds.

Sentencing

Mr. Gerrard: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he is taking to inform the general public about community based sentences. [206148]

Paul Goggins: The Home Office and Probation Areas are working to improve public understanding and knowledge of community sentences and the benefits they can bring to society in terms both of reducing re-offending and payback to the community. A communications campaign through print and broadcast media aims to demonstrate that community sentences can be tough and demanding and involve offenders putting something back into the community. A national visibility scheme for community work is also in place.

The reparation marque 'Making Amends' identifies locations that have benefited from community work. In February/March, we will undertake a 'Clean Up' campaign whereby local people will be given the opportunity to have a direct say in what compulsory unpaid work is carried out by offenders as part of their community punishment. This initiative aims to improve public confidence in community penalties and make compulsory unpaid work by offenders more visible.

We will also aim to generate media coverage of the new community sentences created in the Criminal Justice Act 2003, including Custody Minus and the new generic community sentence as they come on stream.

In addition, Probation Areas are active members of Local Criminal Justice Boards and, as such, are working to raise confidence in all aspects of criminal justice, specifically with victims and minority ethnic communities.

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average length of custodial sentences given to females was in each year since 1997. [206278]

Paul Goggins: The average custodial sentence length imposed on females sentenced for all offences at all courts in England and Wales since 1997 is as follows:

	Average sentence length in months (excluding life sentences)
1997	9.8
1998	9.6
1999	9.0
2000	9.1
2001	10.4
2002	10.3
2003	10.2

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average length of custodial sentences given to *(a)* females and *(b)* males convicted of theft was in the last period for which figures are available. [206283]

Paul Goggins: The average custodial sentence length imposed on females sentenced for offences of theft and handling stolen goods in England and Wales in 2003 was 3.3 months, and for males, 4.3 months.

Mr. Hopkins: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average cost per annum of supervising an individual on a curfew order with an electronic monitoring condition in England and Wales was in the latest period for which figures are available. [207069]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 10 January 2005]:* In the financial year 2003–04, the average cost per annum of supervising an individual on a curfew order with an electronic monitoring requirement was £7,005 for those aged 16 and over and £8,886 for those aged 10 to 15.

Sex Offenders

Mr. Edwards: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* sex offenders and *(b)* other offenders have absconded from (i) HMP Leyhill and (ii) HMP North Sea Camp since 1999. [205494]

Paul Goggins: The information is set out in the following table:

	Total absconds	*Sex offenders*
HMP Leyhill		
1999	11	1
2000	19	2
2001	20	0
2002	39	3
2003	102	2
2004 (to date)	93	1
HMP North Sea Camp		
1999	31	1
2000	20	0
2001	44	0
2002	33	2
2003	72	0
2004 (to date)	39	0

Special Advisers

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many special advisers there are in the Department, broken down by civil service pay grade. [206502]

Mr. Charles Clarke: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 21 December 2004, *Official Report,* column 1640W by my hon. Friend the Member for South Shields (Mr. Miliband).

Terrorism Legislation (Review)

Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what review process applies to the use of anti-terrorism legislation; and if he will make a statement on the effectiveness of that legislation. [205367]

Mr. Charles Clarke *[holding answer 16 December 2004]:* The powers in both the Terrorism Act 2000 (TACT) and the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001 (ATCS) are subject to review processes. Section 126 of the Terrorism Act 2000 requires the Secretary of State to lay a report before Parliament on the working of the Terrorism Act at least once every 12 months. This report is produced by the independent reviewer, currently Lord Carlile, and considers whether the Act has been used fairly and properly during the reporting period, taking into account the need to ensure that there are effective powers to deal with terrorism and adequate safeguards for the individual.

Lord Carlile additionally produces separate reports on the Northern Ireland specific powers within the Terrorism Act and the part 4 detention provisions of the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act, in order to inform the annual renewal debates for those parts of the legislation.

In his most recent review of the Terrorism Act, published in April 2004, Lord Carlile concluded that overall the powers in the Act are necessary, that the provisions are functioning satisfactorily and that it continues to be fit for purpose. His latest report on part 7 of TACT, published in January 2004, recommended that the powers be renewed.

In his report on the operation of part 4 of the ATCS Act, published in February 2004, Lord Carlile concluded that the Secretary of State had certified persons as international terrorists only in appropriate cases and that he had exercised independent judgment in each case. He recommended that continuing scrutiny be given to possible alternatives to detention.

Additionally, the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act provided for a secondary review, of the Act as a whole, under section 122, to be conducted by a committee of Privy Councillors. This committee, chaired by Lord Newton, reported in December 2003.

On 25 February 2004 the Home Secretary published a response to the recommendations made within the Privy Counsellor Review in a discussion paper entitled "Counter Terrorism Powers: Reconciling Security and Liberty in an Open Society". Issues concerning the effectiveness of the ATCS Act raised by Lord Newton's committee were also debated in both the House of Commons, on the day of the above publication and the House of Lords on 4 March 2004.

As part of the discussion paper the Government launched a consultation process inviting contributions on the way forward on counter-terrorism measures over the longer term. The responses to that consultation exercise, together with the implications of the recent House of Lords judgment on the current ATCS Act part 4 powers, are currently under consideration and the Government have announced that they intend to bring forward their proposals early next year.

Trafficking in People

Mr. Wills: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the changes to UK law which would be required in order for the Government to be able to ratify the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (2000). [207039]

Mr. Browne: The United Kingdom was involved in the drafting process of the United Nations Protocol to Prevent and Punish Trafficking in Persons and was one of the first countries to sign the protocol. We are committed to its ratification.

The principal legislative requirement of the protocol is the criminalisation of trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation, forced labour and the removal of organs. We have introduced legislation to criminalise these forms of trafficking. The Sexual Offences Act 2003 includes offences covering trafficking into, within and out of the United Kingdom, for the purposes of sexual exploitation. Offences covering trafficking for other forms of exploitation, including trafficking for the purposes of forced labour and removal of organs, are included in the Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants etc) Act 2004.

We consider that, taken together with existing United Kingdom law, these offences mean that we fully comply with our legislative obligations under the protocol. However, ratification of the UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime, is a pre-requisite to ratification of the protocol. We have identified a need for primary legislation to comply with the requirements of the Convention on the forfeiture of the instrumentalities of crime. Provision for this is included in the Serious Organised Crime and Police Bill, which is currently before Parliament.

Mr. Wills: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to expand the capacity of the POPPY Project to assist women who have been trafficked into prostitution. [207040]

Mr. Browne: The Home Office-funded POPPY Scheme is being independently evaluated. Funding for the scheme has been agreed until March 2005 pending the outcome of the evaluation. Decisions about future Home Office funding, capacity issues and entry criteria for the scheme will be taken in light of lessons learned since the pilot was established in March 2003 and evidence from the final evaluation report, which we expect to receive very shortly.

Mr. Wills: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many cases have been prosecuted under the trafficking offence established in the Sexual Offences Act 2003; [207041]

(2) how many cases have been prosecuted under the trafficking for exploitation offence established in section 4 of the Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants) Act 2004. [207042]

Mr. Browne: We have introduced legislation to criminalise trafficking comprehensively. Sections 57 to 59 of the Sexual Offences Act criminalise trafficking for sexual exploitation. These offences came into force on 1 May 2004. Trafficking for other forms of exploitation, including for forced labour and organ removal, are criminalised by section 4 of the Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants, etc) Bill which came into force on 1 December 2004.

Data on numbers of prosecutions under these sections will be collected in the usual way and published in Home Office criminal statistics. Given that the offences came into effect recently, there is not any information yet held centrally about number of prosecutions.

Mr. Wills: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what guidance has been issued on cases where trafficked children are appealing for exceptional leave to remain and there is evidence to suggest that they may be re-trafficked if returned to their country of origin. [207043]

Mr. Browne: No specific guidance has been issued on cases where trafficked children are requesting permission to remain in the UK. The granting or refusal of leave to enter is governed by the immigration rules, HC 395.

However, guidance is issued to caseworkers on the criteria for assessing asylum claims, humanitarian protection and discretionary leave. Any assessment of asylum or human rights claim will include consideration of the future risk an applicant will face if returned to their country of origin.

We would not enforce the removal of a child on his own unless we were satisfied that the child would be met on arrival in his country and that care arrangements were in place thereafter.

If there was evidence that care arrangements were seriously below the standard normally provided in the country concerned or that they were so inadequate that the child would face a serious risk of harm if returned, consideration would be given to abandoning enforcement action.

Where there was evidence that a child had been trafficked to the United Kingdom, very careful consideration would be given to the child's circumstances in its country of origin before enforcement action was pursued. Where it was considered that removal would place the child at risk of further harm or abuse, such action would be abandoned.

Women Offenders

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to evaluate programmes developed specifically for women offenders. [206012]

Paul Goggins: The Department published 'Focus on female offenders: the Real Women Programme—Probation Service pilot in March 2004, which reported on the pilot programme for women who commit acquisitive crime. A programme for violent Women (CARE) is at the development stage as part of the joint prison and probation strategy for interventions for women. There are no plans for further female specific programmes or evaluation but information on how National Offender Management Service (NOMS) interventions affect female offenders will be collected as part of the RDS NOMS research programme where possible and appropriate. This is supported by the Women's Offending Reduction Programme, also published in March 2004.

Young Offenders

Dr. Vis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many young people aged under 18 years were received into prison *(a)* under sentence and *(b)* on remand in (i) 2003, (ii) 2002 and (iii) 2001. [200435]

Paul Goggins: The number of receptions of young people aged under 18 years into prison establishments, as recorded on the Prison Service central IT system, is provided in the table.

Young people aged under 18 are also held outside of prison establishments in Secure Training Centres and Local Authority Secure Children's Homes.

Receptions into prison establishments of persons aged under 18, by year of reception and custody type[1]: England and Wales

	Remand	Immediate custodial sentence
2001	4,978	5,903
2002	5,427	5,738
2003	5,138	4,918

[1] Total receptions cannot be calculated by adding together receptions in each category, because there is double counting.

Dr. Vis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many black and minority ethnic young men aged 18 to 21 years were received into prison in 2002 *(a)* under sentence and *(b)* on remand. [200466]

Paul Goggins: The requested information, as recorded on the Prison Service Central IT system, is provided in the table.

Receptions[1] into prison establishments of males aged 18 to 21 years, by custody type, age at reception and ethnic group: England and Wales, 2002

	Age			
	18	19	20	21
Remand:				
White	3,479	3,745	3,731	3,654
Black	611	631	639	594
South Asian	126	133	146	201
Chinese and other	224	226	234	233
Unrecorded	1	7	3	6
Immediate custodial sentence:				
White	3,180	4,035	3,958	3,877
Black	414	467	471	474
South Asian	131	139	155	224
Chinese and other	148	199	199	203
Unrecorded	2	7	7	4

[1] Total receptions cannot be calculated by adding together receptions in each category, because there is double counting.

Youth Justice

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the *(a)* organisations, *(b)* associations, *(c)* agencies and *(d)* representative bodies he has consulted on youth justice issues in the last 12 months. [200339]

Paul Goggins: The following list shows the organisations we have consulted on youth justice issues in the last 12 months—in various ways including through a conference, various meetings and the issue of consultation papers. In addition, between October and December 2003 we consulted through young people's websites on our policy paper Youth Justice—The Next Steps, attracting 7,860 responses

Afasic (formerly the Association For All Speech Impaired Children)
Association of Black Police Officers
Association of Chief Education Officers
Association of Chief Officers of Probation
Association of Chief Police Officers
Association of Directors of Social Services
Association of LEA Advisory Officers for Multicultural Education
Association of London Government
Association of Magisterial Officers
Association of Police Authorities
Association of YOT Managers
Association of Youth Offending Team Services
Attendance Centres
Audit Commission
Bar Council
Barnardos
Black Police Association
Borough of Hartlepool
Borough of Rotherham
British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy
British Association of Social Workers
British Youth Council
Care
Carnegie Young People's Initiative
Centre for Crime and Justice Studies, Kings College
Centre for research into Parenting and Children, Oxford University
Centre for Research on the Child and Family, Uni of East Anglia
Chief Constables
Chief Probation Officers
Child Support Agency
Children And Family Court Advisory Support Service
Children Law UK
Children's Fund Evaluators
Children's Fund Managers
Children's Funds
Children's Charities Coalition
Children's Legal Centre
Children's Rights Alliance (England)
Children's Society
Combined Youth Justice Committee (Hampshire and Isle of Wight)
Commission for Racial Equality
Commission for Social Care Inspection
Community Practitioners and Health Visitors Association
Connexions
Contact a Family
Coram Family
Council—South Gloucestershire
Council for Ethnic Minority Voluntary sector Organisations
Council of HM Circuit Judges
Council of HM Crown Court Judges
Courts Service
Crime Concern
Criminal Records Bureau
Crown Prosecution Service
Department for Education and Skills
Department of Constitutional Affairs
Drug Action Teams
Family Rights Group
Family Service Units
Family Welfare Association
Fathers Direct
General Social Care Council
Grandparents Plus

Haringey Council
Hartley-Brewer Parenting Projects
HM Prison Service (for juveniles)
HM Treasury
HMI Constabulary
HMI Probation
Home Office Race Equality Advisory Panel
Homestart
Howard League for Penal Reform
Joseph Rowntree Foundation
Judicial Studies Board
Justice
Justice's Chief Executive
Justice's Clerks Society
Kids Club Network
Kidsactive
Kidscape
Law Society
Legal Services Commission
Liberty
Local Government Association
Local Government Authority
Local Network Funds
Magistrates Association (Youth Courts Committee)
Mediation UK
Metropolitan Police
Michael Sieff Foundation
NACRO
National Association for Youth Justice
National Association of Head Teachers
National Autistic Society
National Bursars Association
National Children's Bureau
National Council for One Parent Families
National Council for Voluntary Youth Services
National Council of Voluntary Child Care Organisations
National Family & Parenting Institute
National Neighbourhood Watch Association
National Youth Agency
Natural Justice
NCH (National Children's Homes)
Neighbourhood Watch
Newcastle Centre for Family Studies
NHS Confederation
Northern Ireland Office
NSPCC
ODPM
Office for Standards in Education
Ofsted
On Track Managers
One Parent Family
Parenting Education and Support Forum
Parentline Plus
Police Authorities
Police Federation of England and Wales
Police Superintendents' Association of England and Wales
Policy Research Bureau
Positive Parenting
Premier Monitoring Services
President of Family Division of High Court
Prison Reform Trust
Race on the Agenda (ROTA)
Rathbone
Rebound/Group 4
Refugee Council
Relate
Riverside Early Years Training Centre
Rizer
Runnymede Trust
Ryogens
Save the Children
Scottish Executive
Secure Training Centres
Service Children's Education Authority
Severnminster Youth Court
Shaftesbury Homes and Arethusa
Shape
Society of Local Authority Chief Executives
Suffolk Youth Court
Supporting Others through Voluntary Action
Sure Start Programme Board
The Children's Society
The Fostering Network (formerly the National Foster Care Association)
TOPSS (Strategic Workforce Development Body for Social Care) Trust for the Study of Adolescence
Turning Point
UK Centre for Evidence Based Policy and Practice, Queen Mary College
UK Youth Parliament
Universities and Colleges Employers Association
VCC (Voice for Children in Care)
Victim Support
Welsh Assembly Government
Women's National Commission
YMCA
Youth Justice Board
Youth Offending Teams

HEALTH

Antidepressants

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much his Department spent on *(a)* smoking cessation and *(b)* assistance for people wishing to withdraw from antidepressant medication in each of the past five financial years. [206276]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The national health service stop smoking services, formerly smoking cessation services, were launched in the health action zones (HAZs) in 1999–2000, with services rolled out across the NHS in 2000–01.

The table shows financial allocations to the NHS stop smoking services from 1999–2000 to date.

	Allocations (£ million)
1999–2000	[1]10
2000–01	20
2001–02	23
2002–03	23
2003–04	41
2004–05	46

[1] HAZ only

Assistance for people wishing to withdraw from antidepressant medication is available from their clinicians and any support is provided as part of routine mainstream services.

The Department is funding a project run by MIND called Coping With Coming Off (Information and Support for Drug Withdrawal). The project will systematically explore people's experiences of coming off or trying to come off psychiatric drugs with the aim of improving the understanding of what makes withdrawal more or less likely to be successful.

Amounts of funding are shown in the table.

MIND—Section 64 Funding

	Amount (£)
2003–04	50,000
2004–05	50,000

Asthma

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research he has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated to establish the number of sufferers from asthma and allied disorders. [206252]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 20 December 2004]:* None. The independent asthma charity, Asthma UK has set up a national asthma audit on its website. This is regularly updated. Further details are available at http://www.asthma.ora.uk/.

Asthma is the commonest chronic disease in the United Kingdom. Accurate data for numbers affected are difficult to obtain. From the Office of National Statistics general practice database 1996, it was estimated that 6.7 per cent., of men and 6.9 per cent., of women in England and Wales were treated for asthma, about 3.5 million people.

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many children were diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder in *(a)* 2002–03 and *(b)* 2003–04. [207486]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 10 January 2005]:* This information is not collected centrally. The National Institute for Clinical Excellence appraisal, published in October 2000, of the use of methylphenidate in treating attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) estimated the prevalence of all types of ADHD at around five per cent, of school-aged children—approximately 345,000 six to sixteen year olds in England.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many prescriptions for *(a)* Ritalin and *(b)* methylphenidate were written in (i) 2002–03 and (ii) 2003–04. [207487]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 10 January 2004]:* The table shows the total number of prescription items (in thousands) of the chemical entity methylphenidate hydrochloride dispensed in the community in England in 2002–03 and 2003–04. The data covers the chemical entity methylphenidate hydrochloride, rather than just Ritalin. Ritalin is one brand of the drug methylphenidate.

Number of prescription items (in thousands) of the chemical entity methylphenidate hydrochloride that were dispensed in the community in England in 2002–03 and 2003–04, by product

Product	Number pf prescription items (thousands) 2002–03	2003–04	Percentage of total items 2002–03	2003–04
Ritalin	150.8	119.6	56	36
Concerta	71.0	151.9	26	46
Equasym	48.9	57.0	18	17
Others	0.5	0.7	0	0
Total for chemical entity methylphenidate hydrochloride	271.3	329.3	100	[1]100

[1] Due to rounding, figures may not add up to 100

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the typical treatment choice is for children diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. [207488]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 10 January 2004]:* The assessment and treatment of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is usually undertaken by child psychiatrists, often with the help and contribution of other members of multidisciplinary child mental health services. However, it is becoming increasingly common for paediatricians to diagnose and manage ADHD. Even with the children diagnosed as having hyperkinetic disorder(the more severe and specific end of the spectrum(a treatment programme should not rely on medication alone. It is recommended that interventions that focus on the behaviour of the child, family interactions, classroom problems and learning difficulties should be offered. A comprehensive assessment involving more than one professional perspective will highlight the various problems that need to be addressed.

The National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) has given advice on the use methylphenidate (more commonly known as Ritalin) in the treatment of ADHD. NICE recommended that methylphenidate should only be used as part of a comprehensive treatment programme for children with a diagnosis of severe ADHD.

Autism

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many children with autism there are, broken down by region; and what proportion of the population this represents in each case. [207480]

Dr. Ladyman: Details of the number of children with autism are not available. The Department commissioned the Medical Research Council (MRC) to undertake a comprehensive review of autism research. This was published in December 2001 and provides an authoritative overview of the current state of knowledge on the prevalence, incidence and causes of autism. It is available on the MRC's website at http://www.mrc.ac.uk/pdf-autism-report.pdf.

The report says that according to recent reviews, "there appears fairly good agreement that autism spectrum disorders affect approximately 60, and more narrowly defined autism 10–30, per 10,000 children under eight".

Cannabis Spray

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he expects cannabis spray to treat pain to receive a licence for use. [206942]

Ms Rosie Winterton: As for any new medicinal product, the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency will only grant a marketing authorisation for a cannabis spray to treat pain when supporting data have been submitted that demonstrate that the quality, safety and efficacy of the product are satisfactory for the intended use.

Care Homes

Brian Cotter: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the work of the Health Protection Agency to combat MRSA in care homes. [204582]

Dr. Ladyman: The principal role of the Health Protection Agency in regard to care homes is to provide advice about preventing the spread of infection, for example in the containment of an outbreak of Methicillin Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*.

Brian Cotter: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research the Government have carried out into *(a)* the prevalence of MRSA in care homes and *(b)* the effectiveness of infection control practices used in care homes. [204584]

Dr. Ladyman: The Department has not commissioned research on the prevalence of Methicillin Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* in care homes. However, the public health medicine and environment group is currently revising and updating the guidance set out in "Guidelines on the Control of Infection in Residential and Nursing Homes".

Dr. Pugh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment has been made of the effect on the availability of potential staff for care homes of the length of the vetting and clearance process. [207528]

Dr. Ladyman: We listened to service providers about their problems in recruiting staff and the effect the regulation on Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) Disclosures were having on their ability to provide services to vulnerable adults. Easements to the CRB regulations in July 2004 allow care home workers to start work before a completed CRB disclosure has been received, provided all other pre-employment checks have been carried out and a satisfactory Protection of Vulnerable Adults (PoVA) first check has been received.

"PoVAFirst" is an optional service provided by the CRB. It allows those organisations who are eligible to access the PoVA list, and who have requested checks of the list on their CRB disclosure application form, to receive results of the PoVA check in advance of the full disclosure being issued. It helps those providers of care to keep their staffing levels up to the necessary statutory requirements.

The length and complexity of the vetting process have to be balanced against the need to minimise the risk of abusers working undetected in care homes.

Dr. Pugh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will abbreviate the clearance process for care home staff when they move employment from a care home for which they have been cleared to another similar home. [207529]

Dr. Ladyman: All care workers of registered providers of care homes, domiciliary care agencies and adult placement schemes must have a Protection of Vulnerable Adults (PoVA) check before they start work. The legislation as it stands only permits a PoVA checks to be carried out as part of a Criminal Records Bureau disclosure.

However, in response to provider concerns, in July 2004 we introduced easements to the regulations which allow staff to start work provided all other pre-employment checks had been satisfactorily completed and a the applicant had been checked against the PoVA list.

To abbreviate the clearance process still further would increase the risk of abuse of vulnerable adults.

Care Standards

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will take steps to ensure that a person approved by one office of the Care Standards Commission is treated as being approved by all other offices of the Care Standards Commission. [206640]

Dr. Ladyman: I understand from the Chair of the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) that they want to move towards a more streamlined registration process, which removes unnecessary duplication where this does not undermine the functions of registration.

In its "Inspecting for Better Lives" consultation document the CSCI lay out how it will make assessments of whether someone is fit to provide care services transferable between offices of the Commission.

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what auditing processes are in place to ensure uniformity of decision making between different offices of the Care Standards Commission with regard to approval of individuals under the provisions of the Health and Social Care (Community Health and Standards) Act 2003. [206641]

Dr. Ladyman: I understand from the Chair of the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) that they recognise the need to improve consistency. CSCI has employed a head of quality whose role is to monitor and improve consistency between different offices and who is developing a quality framework for the Commission.

Civil Service Property

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many items of civil service property within his Department are unaccounted for, broken down by type. [205578]

Ms Rosie Winterton: In 2003–04, the last year for which figures are available, the Department had losses of 37 pieces of equipment worth £43,602. These were all information technology and telecoms items.

Dentists

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what measures his Department is taking to create incentives for dental professionals to work in the NHS sector. [204821]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Dentists who work in the national health service are eligible for membership of the NHS superannuation scheme, maternity, paternity and adoption leave payments, long-term sickness payments, commitment payments and support with continuing professional development and clinical audit. We are undertaking the most far reaching reforms of NHS dentistry since 1948, which, through the delegation of the commissioning of dental services to primary care trusts (PCTS), are intended to make working in the NHS more attractive to dentists. The reforms are supported by additional recurring funding of £250 million in 2005–06—an increase of 19.3 per cent. compared to spending in 2003–04. We have also allocated £59 million in the current financial year to enable hard-pressed PCTs to improve access to NHS dentistry by, for example, funding improvements to practice premises in return for a commitment to register more NHS patients.

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will publish information for *(a)* dentists and *(b)* patients on how the new system of dental contracts will work including how much patients will have to pay. [204822]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The new contractual arrangements involve the delegation of the commissioning of national health service dental services to primary care trusts with replacement of the item-for-service system of remuneration for dentists with one based on patients' overall oral health care needs. Because charges to patients relate to item for service, a new method is needed to determine the amounts charged. We have received a report from the NHS dentistry patient charges working group, chaired by Harry Cayton, which we are considering. We are publishing a series of guidance notes on the new arrangements over the period leading up to their implementation.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* principal and *(b)* assistant dentists there were in (i) England, (ii) each strategic health authority and (iii) each primary care trust who were registering NHS patients in each year since 1997. [206427]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Information on the number of principal and assistant dentists in the general dental service who were recorded as having registered patients is shown in the table for England at September in each of the years 1997 to 2004. Some other assistant dentists who treat registered patients will be excluded because the patients are recorded against the principal dentist.

Number of dentists in the general dental service (GDS) and personal dental service (PDS) with registered patients, England, 1997–2004

September each year	*GDS principals*	*GDS assistants*	*PDS dentists*	*Total*
1997	16,622	1,141	—	17,763
1998	16,770	1,300	—	18,070
1999	16,966	1,457	102	18,525
2000	17,212	1,650	163	19,025
2001	17,271	1,724	351	19,346
2002	17,127	1,809	658	19,594
2003	17,372	1,735	794	19,901
2004	16,417	1,555	2,051	20,023

Separate information is shown for personal dental service dentists who had registered patients; this excludes dentists who treat patients under arrangements where there are no registrations, for example, in dental access centres. Information by strategic health authority (SHA) and primary care trust (PCT) has been placed in the Library.

Mr. Damian Green: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans his Department has to review the data requirements it receives through the Dental Practice Board, as recommended in the National Audit Office report, Reforming NHS Dentistry: Ensuring Effective Management of Risks. [206719]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department has reviewed the information requirements for the new contractual arrangements for primary care dentistry. The information requirements will be finalised and published once the discussions about the new contractual arrangements have been completed, and details of the new patient charge arrangements have been confirmed.

Mr. Damian Green: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps *(a)* his Department and *(b)* the General Dental Council have taken to meet the findings in the 2003 Office of Fair Trading report on private dentistry regarding greater clarity of services and charges for patients. [206722]

Ms Rosie Winterton: We are working with the General Dental Council (GDC) to implement the report's recommendations. The GDC has published 'ethical' guidance which requires that dentists give full information on proposed treatment and costs to patients, whether national health service or private. The guidance explicitly states that "non-compliance with these standards will put a dentist's registration at risk". During 2005, we plan to lay an Order to amend the Dentists Act 1984, which, subject to Parliamentary approval, will give the GDC powers to establish a private complaints system. GDC is already making preparatory arrangements for the investigation and resolution of complaints about private dentistry, including complaints about charges.

Mr. Damian Green: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much was spent by the General Dental Service on *(a)* examinations, *(b)* scaling and *(c)* polishing in the last period for which figures are available. [206723]

Ms Rosie Winterton: In 2003–04, fees paid to General Dental Service dentists for adult examinations were about £151 million. Fees for scaling and polishing, including chronic periodontal work, were about £174 million. For children, routine examinations and scaling are included in the patient capitation payments and so are not separately identifiable.

Mr. Damian Green: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans his Department has to introduce more flexibility with routine recall periods for NHS dental patients, as recommended in the National Collaborating Centre for Acute Care October 2004 Report. [206724]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Under the present item for service remuneration system a dentist may claim a fee for examining a patient at a minimum interval of six months. With the introduction of the new contractual arrangements, founded upon the delegation of the commissioning of national health service dentistry to primary care trusts, dentists will have wider discretion over recall intervals based on their clinical judgement. However, regulations of which we will be laying before Parliament will require NHS dentists to provide services in accordance with guidance issued by the National Institute of Clinical Excellence, who were commissioned by the National Collaborating Centre for Acute Care October 2004 to undertake the dental study.

Mr. Damian Green: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many overseas dentists recruited under the Returning to Practice scheme are *(a)* working for the NHS and *(b)* working privately; [206725]

(2) how many overseas dentists have been recruited under the Returning to Practice scheme to date; and which countries they have come from. [206727]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Returning to Practice scheme is aimed at United Kingdom dentists from the domestic market who, usually, have taken a career break and want to return to national health service work. The scheme is not aimed at overseas dentists.

Mr. Damian Green: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidelines his Department has put in place for the recruitment of dentists from overseas. [206726]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department's revised code of practice for the International Recruitment of Healthcare Professionals, published on 8 December 2004, promotes high standards of practice in the international recruitment and employment of all healthcare professionals, including dentists.

Departmental Costs

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will estimate the cost to *(a)* his Department and *(b)* the NHS of (i) theft and (ii) fraud in each year since 1997. [200605]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Estimates for the cost of theft and total theft in the national health service in England are not available. Estimated figures on fraud levels across the whole NHS in England are not available. However, the NHS counter fraud service (NHS CFS) has an ongoing programme of specialist risk measurement exercises, which is designed to reveal levels of losses and, through repeated exercises, achieve reductions. These exercises concentrated on patient fraud. The tables show the results and are accurate to within plus or minus one per cent. of the losses measured in each of the patient exercises.

£ million

Year data selected	*Fraud losses*
Pharmaceutical patient fraud	
1998–99	117.00
1999–2000	69.00
2002–03	47.00
Dental patient fraud	
1999–2000	40.30
2000–01	30.00
Optical patient fraud	
1999–2000	13.25
2001–02	10.17

Total patient fraud losses have reduced from approximately £170 million to £87 million per year, a reduction of 49 per cent., since the creation of the NHS CFS in 1998.

For the Department, recorded losses through fraud and theft are shown in the following tables.

£000

	[1]*Fraud and theft losses*
1997–98	61.42
1998–99	66.90

[1] For these years, recorded data are for fraud and theft losses combined

£000

	Fraud losses
1999–2000	3.06
2000–01	0.00
2001–02	0.15
2002–03	38.31
2003–04	29.08

£000

	Theft losses
1999–2000	45.09
2000–01	56.83
2001–02	34.71
2002–03	35.59
2003–04	[1]

[1] Not yet available

In my response to a similar question from the hon. Member for Hertford and Stortford (Mr. Prisk), *Official Report*, 18 November 2004, column 1992W, I provided information on fraud in the Department, its agencies and non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs). The figures quoted for the Department for the years 1999–2003 included both theft and fraud rather than just fraud.

The answer should have read as follows.

Table 2 shows figures for fraud, provided by the NHS counter fraud and security management service.

Table 2

	Department	*Agencies*	*NDPBs*	*Total*
1997–98	61,415	1,461	10,458	73,334
1998–99	66,897	0	6,903	73,800
1999–2000	3,055	3,493	2,739	9,287
2000–01	0	0	6,582	6,582
2001–02	150.00	1,706	12,131	13,987
2002–03	38,307	0	0	38,307
2003–04	29,082	[1]168,307	22,259	219,648

[1] From MHRA this includes a stolen cheque for £162,000, which should be reimbursed by the bank. The case is in the hands of their lawyers. This was included in the 2003–04 Her Majesty's Treasury fraud return.

I have written to the hon. Member to apologise for this error and have placed a copy of that letter in the Library.

Departmental Credit Cards

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many credit cards for official expenditure are held by his Department. [206437]

Ms Rosie Winterton: At present, the Department holds 286 active Government procurement cards that are used for official expenditure and that increase efficiency.

Departmental Equipment

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many items of electrical equipment were used by his Department in the last year for which figures are available, broken down by *(a)* cost and *(b)* number of each type of item. [205732]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department has 11,719 electronic items on its Asset Register at a cost of £4,794,455. It has 38,435 other pieces of electrical equipment such as lights and the annual cost of testing these is about £67,000.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much has been spent by his Department on lighting in each year since 1997. [205871]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The cost of supplying lighting to the Department's estate cannot be determined. The Department receives a single bill for the supply of all the electricity to each of its buildings.

Departmental Policies

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will set out, including statistical information relating as directly as possible to the constituency, the effect on Middlesbrough, South and Cleveland, East constituency of his Department's policies since 8 June 2001. [206836]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Government have put in place a programme of national health service investment and reform since 1997 to improve service delivery in all parts of the United Kingdom. There is significant evidence that these policies have yielded considerable benefits for the Middlesbrough, South and Cleveland, East constituency.

For example:

At the end of October 2004, there were no people waiting more than nine months for in-patient treatment at the South Tees Hospitals National Health Service Trust, while in 1997 there were a total of 1,145 waiting more than nine months in the predecessor trusts, the South Tees Hospitals NHS Trust and the Northallerton Health Services NHS Trust. In June 2001, there was a total of 785 waiting more than nine months.

At the end of September 2004, there were 1,033 patients waiting over 13 weeks for out-patient treatment the South Tees Hospitals NHS Trust, while in 1997 there were a total of 986 waiting more than 26 weeks in the predecessor trusts. In June 2001, there was a total of 1,150 waiting more than 26 weeks.

At the end of October 2004, there were no people waiting more than nine months for in-patient treatment within Langbaurgh Primary Care Trust (PCT), a fall from 210 in June 2002.

At the end of October 2004, there were no people waiting more than nine months for in-patient treatment within Middesbrough PCT, a fall from 324 in June 2002.

At the end of September 2004, the number of patients waiting over 13 weeks for out-patient treatment within Langbaurgh PCT has fallen to 111 from 387 in June 2002.

At the end of September 2004, the number of patients waiting over 13 weeks for out-patient treatment within Middlesbrough PCT has fallen to 277 from 836 in June 2002.

In September 2002, at South Tees Hospitals NHS Trust, 92.5 per cent. of patients spent less than four hours in accident and emergency from arrival to admission, transfer or discharge. Figures for September 2004 show an improvement to 97.3 per cent.

Between September 2002 and June 2004, the number of consultants at South Tees Hospitals NHS Trust has increased from 236 to 264. The predecessor trusts had a total of 200 consultants in 1997.

Between September 2002 and September 2003, the number of nurses at South Tees Hospitals NHS Trust has increased from 2,127 to 2,296. The predecessor trusts had a total of 2,077 nurses in 1997.

Figures for October 2004 show that all patients within Langbaurgh PCT are able to be offered an appointment with a primary care professional within two working days.

Figures for October 2004 show that all patients within Middlesbrough PCT are able to be offered appointment with a primary care professional within two working days.

In the Middlesbrough Unitary Authority area death rates from cancer per 100,000 population have fallen from 245 in 1997 to 225.2 in 2001 and to 219.8 in 2003. In the Redcar and Cleveland unitary authority area death rates from cancer per 100,000 population have fallen from 243.2 in 1997 to 208.2 in 2001 and 194.8 in 2003.

In the Middlesbrough Unitary Authority area, death rates from coronary heart disease per 100,000 population have fallen from 206.8 in 1997 to 173.4 in 2001 and 133.8 in 2003. In the Redcar and Cleveland Unitary Authority area death rates from coronary heart disease per 100,000 population have fallen from 193.3 in 1997 to 135.9 in 2001 and 141.4 in 2003.

Langbaurgh PCT's allocation has risen to £105.1 million for 2004–05, a cash increase of 6.9 per cent.

Middlesbrough PCT's allocation has risen to £198.4 million for 2004–05, a cash increase of 7.2 per cent.

An additional magnetic resonance imaging scanner was delivered to James Cook University in February 2003.

Diabetes

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if he will make a statement on the policy of his Department with regard to the provision of blood test strips for people with diabetes; [206611]

(2) how many blood test strips have been supplied to patients in each primary care trust area during the last 12 months. [206612]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Information on electronic prescribing analysis and cost (ePACT) data on the number of blood glucose monitoring test strips prescribed in the year ending September 2004 has been placed in the Library.

The National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) guidelines on self-monitoring of blood glucose stresses that there are benefits from self-monitoring programmes, particularly as part of an integrated self-help package and this is central to the national service framework for diabetes.

Digital Hearing Aids

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidance the Department has given to NHS trusts on the priority for the provision of digital hearing aids to be given to those who are partially sighted. [207044]

Dr. Ladyman: Audiology services should develop their own priorities and guidelines for digital hearing aid assessments and fittings in consultation with primary care trusts and commissioners.

Food Labelling

Clive Efford: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what discussions his Department has had with the Department for Trade and Industry on to ensuring that labelling provides adequate information on the health aspects of the practice of supermarkets adding salt to meat products. [207203]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Responsibility for food labelling rules rests with the Food Standards Agency. Neither my Department nor the Agency have discussed this particular issue with the Department for Trade and Industry. However, discussions on the broad policy of working with the food industry to reduce salt in processed foods have taken place.

Food Supplements Directive

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what substantive amendments were secured by the Food Standards Agency in the negotiations on the food supplements directive subsequent to the meeting between representatives of the National Association of Health Stores, Consumers for Health Choice, Holland and Barrett, and Solgar Vitamin and Herbs, and Mr. Grant Meekin of the agency in 2001. [207532]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The meeting in 2001 was convened to explain the Food Standards Agency's position in relation to the food supplements directive, and the position reached in the course of the European Union negotiations. By the time of the meeting, the Food Standards Agency had secured an important amendment to the directive regarding the period allowed for derogation and for products to remain on the market, pending an opinion from the European Food Safety Authority on the safety of the ingredients. The agency did not undertake to seek further amendments to the directive at the meeting.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) upon what basis the Written Observations of the United Kingdom submitted to the Court of Justice of the European Communities in relation to the legality of the food supplements directive concluded in section 20 that the provisions of the directive themselves do not appear disproportionate; [207566]

(2) upon what basis the Written Observations of the United Kingdom submitted to the Court of Justice of the European Communities in relation to the legality of the food supplements directive concluded in section 17 that the legislation did not breach the principles of subsidiarity; and if he will make a statement. [207597]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The United Kingdom Government's arguments and the basis for those arguments are set out in the Written Observations to which the hon. Member refers.

GP Premises

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the age of general practitioner premises in the NHS in England. [206830]

Mr. Hutton: No central assessment of the age of general practitioner premises in the national health service in England has been made. The majority of GP premises are owner occupied or rented from private sector landlords.

Primary care trusts (PCTs) are responsible for commissioning GP services and for ensuring that the premises from which they are provided are fit for purpose. It is for PCTs to carry out their own individual assessment of these premises where this information is required to support decisions about their local strategic service plans.

GP Surgeries

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the general practitioner surgeries in the Adur, Arun and Worthing Primary Care Trust areas which will receive funding allocations to improve or renew premises in 2004–05; by how much each will benefit; and for what improvements each allocation has been made. [203204]

Mr. Hutton: The decision on investment in general practice surgeries is a local matter for each individual primary care trust, based on its overall strategic investment plans for the development of services locally.

Health Bodies (Salaries and Fees)

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what salaries or fees are paid to the *(a)* chairs and *(b)* chief executives of (i) the Health Care Commission, (ii) the Social Care Commission, (iii) Monitor and (iv) the National Institute for Clinical Excellence; and how many days' work per week each is required to undertake. [207025]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 10 January 2005]*: The information requested is shown in the following table.

Organisation	*Position*	*Salary (£)*	*Days work per week*
Healthcare Commission	Chair	150,878	5
Healthcare Commission	Chief Executive	160,000	5
Commission for Social Care Inspection	Chair	84,456	3
Commission for Social Care Inspection	Chief Inspector	145,000	5
Monitor	Chair[1]	195,000	5
National Institute for Clinical Excellence	Chair	23,654	3
National Institute for Clinical Excellence	Chief Executive	139,353	5

[1] Monitor has an executive chairman.

Health Protection Agency

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) whether further research recommended by a Health Protection Agency Rapid Review Panel report will be assessed by the panel at a later date; and whether a further report will be issued; [206426]

(2) how many applications have been reviewed by the Health Protection Agency's Rapid Review Panel to date; [206428]

(3) for when the Health Protection Agency's Rapid Review Panel's next meeting is scheduled; [206429]

(4) when he will publish the findings from the Health Protection Agency's Rapid Review Panel's meeting which took place on 29 November. [206430]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Manufacturers of products submitted to the Health Protection Agency (HPA) rapid review panel are responsible for deciding whether to act on the panel's recommendation. If the manufacturer decides to undertake further work, they can resubmit the application once the work is complete.

Reports are issued by the HPA for all products considered by the panel.

Reports for 20 of the 25 products reviewed on 29 November were published on the HPA website on 15 December. The reports for the other five products will be published in January.

A final date has not been set for the next meeting of the rapid review panel, but it will be in late January or early February 2005.

32 applications have been reviewed by the panel to date.

Living Wills

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what his policy is on living wills (advanced directives) forms being handed out to patients admitted to NHS hospitals; and if he will make a statement. [206266]

Ms Rosie Winterton: As part of the treatment process, a healthcare professional will discuss with a patient their possible treatment options and seek their consent. This should, where an individual's condition makes it appropriate, include how they would like to be treated if or when they become incapacitated. An advance directive allows patients to indicate what treatment they would, or would not, wish to receive should they not be capable of making a decision in the future.

Nurse Numbers

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the Answer of 15 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1155W, on nurse numbers, how many students entered training to become a nurse or midwife in *(a)* 1996–97 and *(b)* the most recent year for which figures are available; and what proportion of entrants (i) completed their training and (ii) commenced practice in each year. [207046]

Mr. Hutton: The table shows the number of nurses and midwives entering pre-registration training in 1996–97 and the latest available year.

Pre-registration nursing and midwifery training commissions

	Number
1996–97	14,984
2003–04	24,284

Source:
Quarterly Monitoring Returns

Information on the number of nurses who complete training each year was collected by the English National Board for Nursing until its abolition in March 2002 with the creation of the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC). The latest complete information is only available for the 1997–98 cohort of nursing and midwifery students, of whom 72 per cent., had completed training by October 2001.

The NMC holds information on the number of nurses and midwives initially entering the register, a pre-requisite for employment in the national health service and other sectors in the United Kingdom. This information can be found at www.nmc-uk.org.

Miss Begg: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many nurses working in the NHS have been recruited from overseas; how many have dependent children; and how many earn less than a gross annual income of *(a)* £20,000, *(b)* £15,000, *(c)* £13,480 and *(d)* £5,060 from their employment with the national health service. [206250]

Mr. Hutton: The information requested is not collected centrally. The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) registers all nurses who work in the United Kingdom. The NMC provides a statistical analysis of the register; this can be found on the NMC website at www.nmc-uk.org.

Ovarian Cancer

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what new procedures have been implemented for early detection of ovarian cancer in the last five years. [207089]

Miss Melanie Johnson: There is currently no evidence that introducing screening for the early detection of ovarian cancer would save lives. At the moment, there is no screening test reliable enough to be used in women with no symptoms.

Currently the United Kingdom Collaborative Trial of Ovarian Cancer Screening (UKCTOCS) trial is investigating whether screening using CA125 blood test or ultrasound detection will detect ovarian cancer in its early stage. Unlike cervical cancer there is no recognised pre-cancerous abnormalities of the ovary that can be detected and treated. 200,000 women are involved in this study and it will report around 2010. This study is also looking at the implications of introducing ovarian cancer screening into the national health service, what anxieties and fears being screened may raise and what complications might arise.

There is also the nearly completed research, commissioned by the Department, on identifying significant diagnostic factors for ovarian cancer in primary care. This research aims to determine approximately the degree of risk represented by different symptoms and combinations of symptoms, to determine cancer detection rates resulting from different referral strategies and ascertain which factors may contribute to delays in referral or diagnosis.

In 1999, the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) published "Improving Outcomes Guidance for Gynaecological Cancers" outlining how the NHS treats patients with gynaecological cancer, including ovarian cancer. One of the major outcomes of this guidance was the introduction of specialist teams to treat gynaecological cancers and these have been in place since the guidance was published.

Patients urgently referred by a general practitioner with suspected cancer should be seen within two weeks. Latest figures show that 99.5 per cent. of suspected gynaecological cancer referrals were seen within the two-week period.

Patient Environment Action Team

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what his Department is doing to ensure that more hospitals move up the score ladder of the Patient Environment Action Team. [206378]

Mr. Hutton: The patient environment action team (PEAT) score is based on the standards observed on the day of the assessment. It is for each national health service trust to take action locally to maintain and where necessary, improve those standards. Any improvements made since 2004 will be reflected in the 2005 assessments.

Since the launch of the clean hospitals programme, £68 million has been allocated to the NHS to assist in raising standards. The Department has also issued a range of advice, guidance and best practice on ensuring high standards of cleanliness, including the "National Specifications for Cleanliness", the "NHS Healthcare Facilities Cleaning Manual" and "Guidance on Contracting for Cleaning". NHS Estates also provides an advice and support service for any hospitals assessed as less than acceptable to assist them in addressing the shortfalls identified

Patient Forums (Greenwich)

Clive Efford: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if he will make a statement on patient forums in Greenwich; [207204]

(2) how much has been spent on consultant fees to support patient forums in Greenwich; and what the total cost of setting up the forums has been; [207205]

(3) how many local residents are serving on patient forums in Greenwich; and how many have resigned since they were set up. [207206]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The following patients' forums cover the borough of Greenwich:

Greenwich Primary Care Trust patients' forum.

Queen Elizabeth Hospital National Health Service Trust patients' forum.

London Ambulance Services NHS Trust patients' forum.

Oxleas NHS Trust patients' forum.

These four patients' forums have a total of 23 members, 10 of whom live in Greenwich. Since January 2004, 12 members from these four forums have resigned. Three interviews for new members have been scheduled and the Commission for Patient and Public Involvement in Health (CPPIH) is awaiting further documentation for eight other prospective volunteers. The CPPIH has not employed any consultants to support patients' forums(support to patients' forums is provided under contract with voluntary and charitable organisations.

The CPPIH budget for setting up patients' forums and supporting them in 2003–04 was £30 million.

Press Officers

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many press officers are employed in the Department. [206527]

Ms Rosie Winterton: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 18 November 2004.

Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Woolwich

Clive Efford: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on waiting times at the Accident and Emergency Centre at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Woolwich. [207214]

Dr. Ladyman: Information is collected for national health service trusts rather than individual accident and emergency departments. During the quarter ending September 2004 96.4 per cent. of patients at Queen Elizabeth Hospital NHS Trust spent less than four hours from arrival to admission, transfer or discharge.

Salt

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what measures will be taken to reduce the salt content of processed foods to the target set by his Department for 2010. [206840]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Department and the Food Standards Agency are working together with all parts of the food industry, including retailers and manufacturers, to reduce the salt levels of processed foods. The aim is to reduce average population intakes of salt to six grams per person day by 2010.

Residential Care (Savings Disregard)

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate he has made of the cost of increasing the level of the savings disregard to £15.51 for people supported by local authorities in residential care. [207624]

Dr. Ladyman: A savings disregard is applied to all people supported by local authorities in residential care where income exceeds £79.60. The full disregard is applied to all people supported by the local authority whose weekly income exceeds £87.35 even if their weekly income is so great they would not normally qualify for savings credit.

The cost of raising the maximum savings disregard for older supported care home residents to £15.51 per week cannot be calculated precisely, as there are no recent data available on the distribution of income of these residents. A best estimate is that the annual cost is likely to be in the range £70 million to £85 million.

School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what costs were incurred prior to the launch of the School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme; what has been the cost of the scheme in each month since its launch; how many individual pieces of fruit and vegetables have been distributed in each month since its launch; and if he will make a statement. [206425]

Miss Melanie Johnson: In 2000–01 and 2001–02, the lottery-funded New Opportunities Fund (NOF) provided £16 million towards the original pilots and in 2002–03 and 2003–04 NOF supported a scaling-up of the original pilots across five Government regions with £42 million.

The Department spent £0.75 million in 2001–02 and £0.3 million in 2002–03 on administering and evaluating the national school fruit scheme pilots, including the cost of the fruit.

As detailed in the "Choosing Health" White Paper, the national rollout to all local education authority infant, primary and special schools across England of the scheme was completed at the end of 2004. The Department has committed £77 million for the expansion and continuation of the scheme, now known as the school fruit and vegetable scheme, over 2004–05 and 2005–06.

I officially launched the national rollout of the scheme on 10 December 2004, at which time over 1,867,000 pupils throughout England were receiving a fresh piece of fruit or vegetable each school day. This equates to approximately 36,500 million pieces of fruit or vegetable every school month.

More details on our strategy for improving diet will be announced in 2005, when the Government will publish its delivery plan for the White Paper and the food and health action plan.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment *(a)* has been made and *(b)* he plans to make of the effectiveness of the School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme, with particular reference to improving long-term eating habits. [206645]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The "Choosing Health" White Paper set out the Government's strategy for achieving long-term improvements in the health and diet of the population. The school fruit and vegetable scheme has a key role to play in instilling good eating habits in young people and is contributing towards the obesity public service agreement to:

> "halt the year-on-year rise in obesity among children under 11 by 2010, in the context of a broader strategy to tackle obesity in the population as a whole".

The Department commissioned a National Opinion Poll survey of the school fruit and vegetable scheme, then known as the national school fruit scheme, which was published in October 2003. Nearly half of all parents questioned in that survey thought that the scheme had made them more aware of the importance of fruit for a healthy diet and over a quarter of children and their families reportedly ate more fruit at home as a direct result of the scheme.

The Big Lottery Fund has commissioned a full evaluation of the impact of the school fruit and vegetable scheme on children's diet and a full report is expected in early 2005. The evaluation uses a dietary assessment tool that has been specially developed for the Department for use with four to six year old children.

More details on our strategy for improving diet will be announced in 2005, when the Government will publish its delivery plan for the White Paper and the food and health action plan.

Silverlands

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will obtain a market valuation of Silverlands, Chertsey in Surrey. [206634]

Mr. Hutton: Silverlands is in the process of being sold and thus any valuations obtained are commercially confidential.

Stolen Property

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many civil servants from his Department have *(a)* faced disciplinary proceedings as a result of allegations of theft, *(b)* been charged with theft and *(c)* been dismissed following theft allegations in each year since 1997. [206396]

Ms Rosie Winterton: None.

Therapy

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the waiting times are for *(a)* cognitive behavioural therapy and *(b)* other forms of talking treatment in each primary care trust area. [206360]

Dr. Ladyman: The Department does not collect information centrally concerning waiting times for psychological therapies. However, discussion has taken place with the Healthcare Commission concerning the potential for a measure of this type to be included as a local indicator of trust performance. The Healthcare Commission is currently engaged in a public consultation that will help the Commission fulfil its obligations to take account of standards in assessing the performance of health care providers. The Healthcare Commission's document Assessment for Improvement is available on its website at http://www.consultation.healthcarecommission.org.uk

TV Information Services

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what proportion of NHS Direct's budget was spent on providing services through digital television channels in the last period for which figures are available; [199480]

(2) what the cost to the Government of providing health information services through television has been since the services were established; [199481]

(3) whether his Department plans to deliver further health information services through digital television channels. [199482]

Ms Rosie Winterton: About £5 million per year will be invested for the next three years in digital television; this is the cost of running the service across all the main digital TV platforms. The digital satellite service (the service at launch) costs just over £2 million per year.

The resources invested to date come from the Department's budget; not from that of NHS Direct.

NHS Direct and the Department launched NHS Direct Interactive on digital satellite television on 16 December 2004. During 2005, this service will be extended and will be launched on other digital TV platforms.

Written Answers to Questions

Wednesday 12 January 2005

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

CHP

Richard Younger-Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what projections she has made of the amount of electricity used on the Government Estate which is sourced from good quality combined heat and power; and whether she expects the 15 per cent. target for such electricity to be met in 2010. [205246]

Mr. Morley: 0.8 per cent. of electricity used on the Government Estate when the target was set, around 23 GWh/yr, was Good Quality CHP electricity. Departments are required to put in place strategies for delivering the CHP and other targets in accordance with the Energy chapter of the Framework for Sustainable Development on the Government Estate. We project that this will amount to 350–400 GWh/yr for Good Quality CHP in 2010. This assumes the 2010 target of increasing energy efficiency by 15 per cent. is achieved.

Energy Consumption (Televisions)

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her most recent estimate is of the daily energy consumption resulting from the use of standby units on televisions; and if she will make a statement. [206025]

Mr. Morley: The Government's Market Transformation Programme estimates that the 60 million television sets in the UK consume approximately 3 million Kwh per day while they are in standby mode—approximately 8 per cent. of their total average daily energy consumption.

In order to try to reduce the overall energy consumed by televisions the Market Transformation Programme (www.mtprog.com) has been encouraging manufacturers to reduce both the "on" and the "standby" power consumption of televisions through the adoption of design improvements, an EU-wide voluntary code of conduct, and best practice guidelines and targets.

The EU-wide voluntary agreement on televisions has been particularly successful in reducing the average energy consumed by televisions in standby mode with the majority of new televisions sold in the UK soon to consume around 1 watt of power in standby mode rather than the 3–8 watts consumed by older models. We expect this agreement to be extended to cover additional consumer electronics shortly.

In addition, the Government"s initiative on sustainable procurement, announced last autumn, includes a requirement for Government Departments which purchase televisions to specify televisions with standby power requirements of less that 1 watt.

Feral Animals

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has to introduce a policy on the control of feral animals. [206627]

Mr. Morley: We have no plans to introduce a general policy to cover all feral animals. The management of wildlife, whether feral or not, is dealt with on a species by species basis, as and when control is required, with action being taken by a range of different bodies, and by individual landowners and occupiers.

One of the key recommendations arising from the Working Group report on the Review of Non-Native Species Policy (2003) was that policies should be established with respect to the management and control of invasive non-native species currently present or newly arrived in the wild. To this end research has been commissioned by English Nature to establish an environmental audit of non-native species within England (replicating a similar audit of species in Scotland by Scottish Natural Heritage), and by Defra to develop a standard methodology for carrying out risk assessments on species, pathways and receptor habitats. The results of this research will inform Government policy on the control of non-native species in the wild.

Waste Management

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much waste, by *(a)* tonnage and *(b)* percentage, has been disposed of by each county council by (i) landfill, (ii) recycling and (iii) incineration in each year since 1997. [200009]

Mr. Morley: The Department is currently preparing figures for publication on the management of municipal waste at waste disposal authority level. This information comes from the Defra Municipal Waste Management survey and has previously been published at regional level. The more detailed figures are expected to be published on the departmental website and a copy placed in the House Library in February 2005.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what *(a)* tonnage and *(b)* percentage of waste has been disposed of by (i) landfill, (ii) recycling and (iii) incineration since 1997–98, (A) in total and (B) broken down by waste disposal authority. [202066]

Mr. Morley: The Department is currently preparing figures for publication on the management of municipal waste at waste disposal authority level. This information comes from the Defra Municipal Waste Management survey and has previously been published at regional level. The more detailed figures are expected to be published on the departmental website and a copy placed in the House Library in February 2005.

HEALTH

Autism

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the ratio is of *(a)* consultants, *(b)* nurses and *(c)* general practitioners with a specialism in autism spectrum disorder to autistic children in England; and if he will make a statement. [206971]

Mr. Hutton: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Care Homes

Jon Cruddas: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* care homes and *(b)* care home beds there have been in England in each year since 1997. [207154]

Dr. Ladyman: Information on the number of care homes and places in England for adults aged 18 and over, at 31 March for the years 1997 to 2001 is shown in the following table.

I understand from the Chair of the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) that figures for later years were collected by the National Care Standards Commission, and now CSCI, but that comparable details are not available.

Number of care homes[1] and places for adults aged 18 and over in England, 31 March 1997 to 2001

Rounded numbers

	1997	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*
Homes	28,900	29,000	28,700	28,300	27,500
Places	534,400	553,500	546,200	539,200	528,000

[1] Includes residential homes, nursing homes, mental nursing homes, private hospitals and clinics.

Source:

RA and RH(N).

Chiropody

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much each *(a)* primary care trust and *(b)* strategic health authority spent on commissioning chiropody and podiatry services in 2003–04. [207625]

Dr. Ladyman: This information is not collected centrally.

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what waiting time targets apply to NHS-funded chiropody and podiatry services; and what plans there are to change these. [207626]

Mr. Hutton: National waiting time targets do not apply to non-consultant led activity.

CPPIH

Nick Harvey: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the costs incurred in *(a)* establishing and *(b)* abolishing the Commission for Patient and Public Involvement in Health. [206910]

Ms Rosie Winterton: In 2002–03, around £2.5 million was spent establishing the Commission for Patient and Public Involvement in Health (CPPIH). The costs of abolishing the CPPIH and the transitional costs associated with implementing the replacement arrangements will be met from within the CPPIH budget. The CPPIH budget for 2005–06 is being finalised.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many overseas trips, and at what total cost, have been made by his Department in each year since 1997; and what the costs of *(a)* flights, *(b)* internal travel, *(c)* hotel accommodation and *(d)* subsistence were of each trip. [206657]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Information on the number of overseas trips and on internal travel within countries is not available.

Other information requested is shown in the tables.

£

	Cost of flights
1997–98	325,515
1998–99	353,263
1999–2000	313,946
2000–01	320,406
2001–02	388,460
2002–03	391,313
2003–04	464,271

£

	Other overseas travel[1]
1997–98	59,037
1998–99	61,564
1999–2000	46,361
2000–01	41,005
2001–02	37,120
2002–03	18,817
2003–04	39,080

[1] Rail and other travel.

£

	Costs of overseas subsistence[1]
1997–98	183,366
1998–99	170,461
1999–2000	188,733
2000–01	183,248
2001–02	156,911
2002–03	159,108
2003–04	203,274

[1] Including hotel costs.

All travel complied with the requirements of the Ministerial Code, Travel by Ministers and the Civil Service Management Code.

Food Standards Agency

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much the Food Standards Agency spent on information leaflets in *(a)* 2002, *(b)* 2003 and *(c)* 2004. [206550]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Food Standards Agency works to the financial year. For the year commencing 1 April 2002 and ending on 31 March 2003, £503,958 was spent on information leaflets. For 2003–04, £193,219 was spent and for 2004–05 to date, £96,879.

General Practitioners (Derbyshire)

Mr. McLoughlin: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has for additional general practitioner surgeries in *(a)* the West Derbyshire constituency and *(b)* Derbyshire. [207445]

Dr. Ladyman: It is for primary care trusts (PCTs) to commission health services to meet the needs of their local populations in partnership with strategic health authorities and other local stakeholders. It is the responsibility of PCTs locally to determine how best "to use their funds to meet national and local priorities".

Green Spaces

Paddy Tipping: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent discussions he has held with *(a)* the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and *(b)* the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister on the role of natural green spaces in the forthcoming delivery plan on physical activity. [207087]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Both I and departmental officials meet regularly with colleagues from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) to discuss a range of issues. Both Departments are members of the activity co-ordination team (ACT), which I chair jointly with my right hon. Friend the Minister for Sport (Richard Caborn). ACT is co-ordinating Government action on increasing participation in physical activity and sport.

DEFRA and ODPM were both involved in the discussions leading up to publication of the Public Health White Paper, "Choosing Health, Making healthy choices easier", and have an important contribution to make to the delivery plan for physical activity.

The Department is fully involved in the preparations for delivery of the ODPM Public Service Agreement Target 8, concerning cleaner, safer and greener public spaces.

Health Staff (Tyne and Wear)

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* nursing, *(b)* professional, *(c)* technical and *(d)* medical staff were employed in (i) the Tyne and Wear Strategic Health Authority area and (ii) the Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals Trust in each year since 1999. [207339]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The information requested is shown in the following table.

NHS hospital, public health medicine and community health services: Medical and dental staff and professionally qualified clinical staff in the Northumberland, Tyne and Wear strategic health authority area and the Newcastle Upon Tyne hospitals NHS trust as at 30 September in each year since 1999.

Headcount

	1999	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
Q09 Northumberland, Tyne and Wear					
Medical and dental staff	2,407	2,558	2,622	2.745	2,861
Qualified nursing, midwifery and health visiting staff	11,081	11,098	11,906	12.332	12,455
Qualified scientific, therapeutic and technical staff	3,143	3.291	3,428	3,888	4,155
Of which:					
Allied health professionals	1,480	1,571	1,611	1,696	1,832
Other qualified STT	1,663	1.720	1,817	2,192	2.323
Ambulance staff	617	512	512	541	545
Of which:					
RTD Newcastle Upon Tyne hospitals NHS trust					
Medical and dental staff	967	1,073	1,136	1,173	1,190
Qualified nursing, midwifery and health visiting staff	3,398	3,213	3,539	3,616	3,613
Qualified scientific, therapeutic and technical staff	1,010	1,009	1,075	1.357	1,441
Of which:					
Allied health professionals	394	394	417	383	419
Other qualified STT	616	615	658	974	1,022

Sources:
Department of Health Non-Medical Workforce Census
Department of Health Medical and Dental Workforce Census

Hospital Beds (Dorset)

Mr. Letwin: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what contingency plans for the provision of hospital beds are in place for the winter in NHS trusts in Dorset. [207593]

Ms Rosie Winterton: In line with our policy of "Shifting the Balance of Power", it is now for primary care trusts (PCTs), in partnership with strategic health authorities (SHAs) and other local stakeholders, to plan, develop and improve services for local people. We recognise that health services are better when management is devolved to the frontline. Within the framework set out in the "NHS Plan" and other policy documents, PCTs, with their specialised knowledge of the local community, are effectively able to manage and improve local services.

All national health service trusts, PCTs and social services authorities in the Dorset and Somerset area have developed escalation plans for winter 2004–05, which describe how the organisation will respond to an increase in demand above normal operating levels, but below the level of demand which would be declared a major incident.

The Dorset and Somerset SHA will produce, on a weekly basis, an analysis of the information drawn from weekly situation reports, so that comparative data for key pressure indicators can be recorded and analysed. This analysis will be circulated to all organisations in the local health community.

Hospital-acquired Infections

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what assessment he has made of the prevalence of hospital-acquired infections in *(a)* NHS community hospitals and *(b)* other NHS residential settings in the community; [207617]

(2) if he will publish the surveillance data on rates of MRSA in community hospitals; and if he will make a statement; [207618]

(3) how many NHS patients in *(a)* NHS community hospitals, *(b)* intermediate care beds and *(c)* NHS community settings contracted (i) MRSA and (ii) other hospital acquired infections in the last period for which figures are available. [207620]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 10 January 2005]:* The mandatory surveillance of hospital-acquired infections, including Methicillin Resistant "Staphylococcus aureus", is carried out only in national health service acute trusts. Data are not collected centrally for community hospitals, intermediate care beds or NHS community/residential settings.

Illegal Meat

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what punishments may be imposed upon those found guilty of selling or trading in dirty, diseased and illegal cuts of meat; what assessment he has made of the suitability of the punishments; and what further action he is taking to tackle such trade. [207478]

Miss Melanie Johnson: It is an offence to contravene Article 14 of Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 by placing any food on the market if it is unsafe. In the Crown court, the penalty for doing so is an unlimited fine and/or a maximum of two years' imprisonment. In the magistrates court, the corresponding penalty is a fine of up to £20,000 and/or a maximum of six months' imprisonment. It is also possible to prosecute some such activities for conspiracy to defraud under the Theft Act 1968, for which the penalty is an unlimited fine and/or a maximum of 10 years' imprisonment.

In addition, confiscation orders can be imposed where a defendant has been convicted in the Crown court, or committed there either for sentence or for the issue of a confiscation order to be considered. The Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 sets out the strict rules to be met on the procedure, and the requirements to be met, which vary with the circumstances.

The Food Standards Agency is assessing the suitability of the penalties, following consultation with stakeholders on the recommendations of the Waste Food Task Force.

The Food Standards Agency has, with its partners in other Government Departments and enforcement bodies, a wide-ranging action plan to tackle meat crime. This action plan includes measures that have tightened the legislation on animal by-products, improved and provided extra resources for enforcement, and raised the profile of meat crime among sentencers.

Infection Control

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what procedures his Department recommends for use in infection control in primary care in the NHS. [207621]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 10 January 2005]:* In 2003 the National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE) published guidelines, commissioned by the Department, on "Infection Control: prevention of healthcare associated infection in primary and community care". These guidelines are part of the Government's consistent approach to support evidence-based practice in infection control. and are a good basis for developing local policies. The guidelines are available on NICE'S website.

Midwives

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many midwife vacancies there were in *(a)* England, *(b)* each strategic health authority and *(c)* each primary care trust in each year since 1997; and what the vacancy rate was in each case in each year. [207628]

Mr. Hutton: Information on the number and rate of vacancies lasting three months or more has been collected by the Department in each year since March 1999.

The vast majority of midwives are employed by national health service organisations other than primary care trusts; information on three month vacancies for midwives in all NHS organisations in England, in each year since 1999, has been placed in the Library.

Pay Television Subscriptions

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many pay television subscriptions the Department had in each year since 1997; and what the cost was in each year. [207665]

Ms Rosie Winterton: In 1997–98, a Parliamentary annunciator system was introduced, which provides a direct feed from the Palace of Westminster. This is a free service to hon. and right hon. Members in their ministerial offices,

The only payment the Department makes for a television service is to the Central Office of Information for the viewing of Select Committees, which costs £27,739.40 per year.

Prostate Cancer

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of possible links between pesticides and prostate cancer. [208243]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The independent Committee on Carcinogenicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment (COC) has recently completed a review of prostate cancer. The COC has concluded that there is some limited evidence to suggest an association between farmers/farm workers, exposure to pesticides and increased risk of prostate cancer. The

COC advice is to be considered by the Advisory Committee on Pesticides (ACP) at its meeting on 13 January 2005. The ACP is the principal source of regulatory advice to Government on pesticides.

Psychiatric Appointments (Blackburn)

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many psychiatric appointments at Queen's Park Hospital, Blackburn were *(a)* booked, *(b)* cancelled by the hospital and *(c)* cancelled by patients in the past 12 months. [206582]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the members of the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency's expert working group on selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors will be required to publish their interests. [206943]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The interests held by the members of the committee on safety of medicines (CSM) expert working group on selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors were published in the annual report of the GSM for 2003. A copy is available in the Library.

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many studies considered by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency's expert working group on selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors included *(a)* raw data from clinical trials and *(b)* summaries of data. [206944]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The findings of the committee on safety of medicines' expert working group on selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors were based on detailed analysis of a number of sources of data including clinical trial data provided by pharmaceutical companies, studies on the general practice research database, the published literature and individual reports from health professionals and patients. Full details of the data considered and the conclusions of the expert working group are presented in the report of the group, which is available on the website of the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (www.mhra.gov.uk). Copies of the report are available in the Library.

Surgical Urology (Dorchester)

Mr. Letwin: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will provide financial assistance for patients travelling to Bournemouth for surgical urology treatments currently available at Dorchester, if these treatments cease to be available at Dorchester. [207594]

Ms Rosie Winterton: It is now for primary care trusts (PCTs) in partnership with strategic health authorities (SHAs) and other local stakeholders to plan, develop and improve services for local people. We recognise that health services are better when management is devolved to the frontline. Within the framework set out in the NHS Plan and other policy documents, PCTs with their specialised knowledge of the local community are effectively able to manage and improve local services. It is therefore up to the local PCT to agree to reimburse patients' travelling.

Where necessary, patients are free to apply for reimbursement under the Hospital Travel Costs Scheme if they are eligible. Further details of the hospital travel cost scheme have been placed in the Library and are also available at www.dh.gov.uk.

Tooth Decay

Mr. Damian Green: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress has been made in reducing dental decay for five-year-olds in England since 1997; and whether he expects to meet his targets in the same group for *(a)* the average number of decayed, missing or filled teeth and *(b)* the percentage with no dental caries. [206729]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The report of the decennial national child dental health survey 2003 shows that dental decay in 8, 12 and 15-year-old children has decreased since 1983 to its lowest recorded level. 12-year-old children in England have the best oral health of that age group in Europe.

The targets set in 1994 were that 12-year-olds should have no more than an average of 1.0 teeth with decay experience, 70 per cent. of five-year-olds should have no decay experience and that five-year-olds should have no more than an average of 1.0 teeth with decay experience. The 2003 survey found that 12-year-olds in England had an average of 0.7 teeth with obvious decay experience, 59 per cent. of five-year-olds in England had no primary teeth with obvious decay experience and the average number of primary teeth with obvious decay in five-year-olds was 1.5. Therefore the target for 12-year-olds was achieved with a substantial margin, but those for five-year-olds were not met.

The fluoridation of water offers the best prospect for improving the oral health of children. The 2003 Water Act transferred responsibility for deciding whether an area"s water supply should be fluoridated from the water company to the strategic health authority (SHA)—provided that the local population is in favour. We have been consulting on how SHAs should assess local opinion and will shortly be laying regulations before the House on the procedures they should follow.

Working Time Directive (Derbyshire)

Mr. McLoughlin: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate he has made of the cost of implementing the European Working Time Directive for NHS trusts in *(a)* West Derbyshire constituency and *(b)* Derbyshire in each of the last three years. [207443]

Mr. Hutton: We do not collect this information centrally.

Implementation of the Working Time Directive is a local matter for national health service trusts, performance managed by strategic health authorities.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Afghanistan

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on his policy towards funding crop sprayer aircraft in support of the Afghan Government's poppy eradication programme. [207097]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: The Government of Afghanistan's stated policy is not to use aerial methods to eradicate opium poppy crops. DFID supports this policy position and have no intention of using DFID funds to support aerial crop spraying in any form.

DFID does, though, provide significant assistance to the counter-narcotics effort in Afghanistan, mainly through our support to the provision of alternative livelihoods.

E-mails

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what his Department's policy is in relation to the storage and deletion of e-mails; and whether this policy has been reviewed in the past 12 months. [206740]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: The Department for International Development (DFID) continues to implement well established policies and procedures for the review and disposal of files in accordance with its administrative needs and the Public Records Acts. DFID has had a clear policy on the retention of significant e-mails on subject files since 1997. E-mails which record significant information or form part of a decision or policy development must be printed and placed on the relevant registered file. These files are retained in line with disposal schedules agreed with the National Archives, which have not been reviewed during the last 12 months.

Insignificant e-mails and those of short term importance are deleted when no longer required and e-mails remaining in staff mailboxes are deleted after 90 days. This position has recently been re-stated in an e-mail policy approved in November 2004. The policy will be revised in 2005 to comply with electronic document and records management.

Further e-mail guidance is available on the National Archives website at: http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/electronicrecords/advice/pdf/managing_emails.pdf.

Iraqi Interim Authority

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) what assessment he has made of the joint proposal of the Iraqi Interim Authority and the International Monetary Fund to cancel the food ration to Iraqi families and to replace it with a conditional cash payment; [207522]

(2) what discussions he has had with *(a)* the Iraqi Interim Authority and *(b)* the International Monetary Fund over their joint proposal to cancel the food ration to Iraqi families and to replace it with a conditional cash payment. [207521]

Hilary Benn *[holding answer 11 January 2005]:* The Government of Iraq has said that it is committed over the medium term to enhancing the effectiveness of social safety nets in Iraq by moving from a food ration system, which handed out virtually free food to the entire population of Iraq, to a cash distribution system targeted at the poor and unemployed. The aim will be to help domestic agriculture, encourage private trade and remove price distortions, at the same time as ensuring that families in need are properly safeguarded. The details have yet to be determined, and are expected to be followed up by the Iraqi Transitional Government after the forthcoming elections. DFID supports the reform in principle. DFID staff and advisers will continue to maintain contact with the Iraqi authorities, and with interested international organisations including the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the World Food Programme, to ensure that the interests of poor and vulnerable families in Iraq are protected.

Mozambique Floods

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much aid has been given by the UK Government to the reconstruction in Mozambique following the floods of 2000 setting out *(a)* the amount of monetary aid and *(b)* the amount of resources and materials which have been sent to the area. [207808]

Hilary Benn: DFID provided £37 million to Mozambique in direct response to the floods of 2000. This was composed of £10 million in additional budgetary assistance to the Government of Mozambique, £7 million for the reconstruction of the north-south highway and a total of £20 million channelled through United Nations agencies and NGOs to meet a range of emergency needs, including food assistance, helicopter operations, provision of water and sanitation and logistical support. DFID continues to be an important supporter of Mozambique's development more broadly and our aid programme has grown from £22 million per year in 2001–02 to £47 million in 2004–05.

Tsunami Relief Appeal

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development whether the UK Government's financial contribution towards the Tsunami relief appeal will come from the contingency fund. [207737]

Hilary Benn: The UK Government have so far allocated £75 million as an immediate humanitarian response to the Tsunami disaster. The initial £50 million comprised £20 million drawn from DFID's humanitarian reserve, and £30 million from its central contingency reserve. The remaining £25 million, announced on 10 January, is being met through additional provision from the Treasury's reserve. None of this funding has been taken from our existing development programmes.

Zimbabwe

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the nature of European Development Fund support for Zimbabwe. [207125]

Hilary Benn: Since 2001, the EC has suspended normal development assistance in Zimbabwe and has redirected its assistance to those sectors that directly support the population. The main areas of intervention under the European Development Fund (EDF) are in humanitarian assistance, health, education and community development sectors. Humanitarian assistance focuses on food security and targets support to rural vulnerable households, through seed and fertiliser packs and small-scale irrigation schemes. The health programme contributes to the availability of safe blood and the supply of essential drugs. The education programme provides school improvement grants and the community development support is mainly for micro projects, involving small grants to communities along similar lines to the UK Government's small grant scheme.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Teachers (Hertfordshire)

Claire Ward: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many teachers were employed in Hertfordshire schools in *(a)* 1995 and *(b)* 2004. [207572]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: There were 9,070 regular teachers (full-time equivalent) in the maintained schools sector in Hertfordshire local education authority in January 1995, compared to 9,820 in January 2004.

Capital Investment (Dagenham)

Jon Cruddas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what capital investment her Department has made in the Dagenham constituency in the last five years. [207161]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The following table includes the capital allocations made to the Dagenham constituency in the last five years.

	£000
2000–01	5,026
2001–02	5,894
2002–03	39,925
2003–04	5,852
2004–05	7,395

The figure of £39,925,000 in 2002–03 includes a Private Finance Initiative allocation of £35,000,000.

Foreign Languages

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the take-up of modern foreign languages at Key Stage 4 following the declassification of modern foreign languages as a foundation subject. [207559]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The changes to the statutory curriculum at Key Stage 4 were only introduced from September 2004, so no assessment of take-up of modern foreign languages has yet been made.

The changes have been introduced to enable schools to offer more choice and flexibility to their pupils, facilitating the introduction of new types of learning—something which proved difficult within the constraints of the previous requirements.

A joint letter from myself and the National Director for Languages was sent earlier this year to all Chief Education Officers reminding them of the statutory requirements at Key Stage 4 and asking them to monitor the situation and promote modern foreign languages within their authority.

While we anticipate a temporary decline in the number of pupils choosing to follow a course in modern foreign languages at Key Stage 4, the introduction of an entitlement to study languages at Key Stage 2 together with the implementation of the Key Stage 3 Modern Foreign Languages Framework—which has already had a positive impact on attitudes and achievement—will engage and enthuse more pupils to continue to learn languages from age 14 into adulthood. By providing opportunities other than the traditional GCSEs and A-levels, we are giving more accreditation opportunities which we hope will motivate more learners to study languages at Key Stage 4.

Pupil-Teacher Ratios (Newcastle upon Tyne)

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many qualified teachers were in service at *(a)* maintained nursery and primary schools and *(b)* maintained secondary schools in Newcastle upon Tyne in each year since 1998; and what the ratio of teachers to pupils was in each sector in each case. [207340]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The following tables show the headcount and full-time equivalent number of qualified teachers and the pupil-teacher ratio for maintained nursery, primary and secondary schools in Newcastle upon Tyne local education authority in each year since 1998.

Maintained Nursery

	Qualified teachers		
	Headcount	*FTE*	*Pupil-teacher ratio*
1998	25	24.0	23.8
1999	24	24.0	23.2
2000	26	25.0	23.0
2001	26	25.7	23.4
2002	27	25.4	23.2
2003	29	27.3	21.7
2004	36	30.8	18.5

Maintained Primary[1]

	Qualified teachers		
	Headcount	*FTE*	*Pupil-teacher ratio*
1998	973	874.0	24.1
1999	969	897.3	23.2
2000	947	869.4	23.5
2001	950	880.1	22.9

Maintained Primary [1]

	Qualified teachers		
	Headcount	*FTE*	*Pupil-teacher ratio*
2002	939	871.3	22.9
2003	940	864.4	22.6
2004	960	860.2	22.5

[1] Includes middle schools as deemed

Maintained Secondary [1]

	Qualified teachers		
	Headcount	*FTE*	*Pupil-teacher ratio*
1998	1,107	1,034.8	17.1
1999	1,130	1,048.9	17.0
2000	1,130	1,053.5	17.0
2001	1,161	1,088.9	16.6
2002	1,160	1,103.3	16.1
2003	1,137	1,070.7	16.6
2004	1,195	1,100.0	15.9

[1] Includes middle schools as deemed

Source.

Annual School Census

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will list the attributable *(a)* articles and *(b)* contributions that his Department's special advisers made to (i) newspapers, (ii) journals, (iii) books and (iv) other media in their official capacity between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004. [201455]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given on 13 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 836W.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Telecommunications Masts

9. **Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has to make changes to planning policy relating to telephone masts. [207367]

Keith Hill: Planning Policy Guidance Note 8 on Telecommunications was issued in August 2001 to reflect the changes in the planning regulations that were made at the same time. The Government have a strategy to replace all PPGs with Planning Policy Statements. PPG8 will be replaced by a PPS8 in due course.

Travellers

10. **Mr. Luff:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has to make changes to the planning system in relation to caravan sites for gypsies and travellers. [207368]

Yvette Cooper: On 22 December the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister published a draft circular "Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Sites" on which we have invited comments. The aim of the circular is to ensure that the planning system makes provision for more sites to meet the needs of gypsies and travellers.

Local Government

11. **Mr. Borrow:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the merits of moving to a unitary system of local government in Lancashire. [207369]

Mr. Raynsford: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is satisfied that the recommendations for unitary local government in Lancashire put forward by the Boundary Committee (with a minor modification regarding Ormskirk) would have represented effective structures for local government if an elected Regional Assembly had been established. However, as my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister made clear in a statement to the House on 8 November 2004, following the decision of voters in the North East referendum, there will be no reorganisation of local government arising from our proposals for elected Regional Assemblies.

13. **Mr. Clelland:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps his Department is taking to develop a long-term strategy on the role of local government. [207371]

Phil Hope: The Government launched a debate on the future of local government with the publication of a discussion paper on the future of local government, and a prospectus for local area agreements, last July. Over the coming months, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister intends to publish further discussion papers on key issues, the first of which will look at neighbourhood engagement and leadership.

14. **Mr. Jim Cunningham:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps his Department is taking to support professional development of local government staff. [207372]

Phil Hope: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister offers support for the professional development of local government staff through a number of routes. These include:

A National Graduate Development programme, in partnership with the Local Government Employers Organisation;

A new Future Leadership programme, for middle managers, funded through the National Capacity Building Programme;

A National Centre for Sustainable Communities Skills to promote world class skills sets for everyone engaged in the sustainable communities initiative.

Authorities are also being offered opportunities for focused training to improve their management of projects and programmes and service delivery both generally, through the Capacity Building initiative, and in the specific areas of housing provision, IT and e-government service delivery.

Fire Prevention

12. **Jim Knight:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what support is available from his Department to fire and rescue authorities to enable them to provide advice to vulnerable households on how to prevent fire. [207370]

Mr. Raynsford: The Community Fire Safety Innovation Fund supports local initiatives to reduce fire deaths; the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is funding free smoke detectors and fire suppression equipment; Revenue Support Grant takes account of authorities' prevention activity; the research programme identifies good practice; the National Community Fire Safety Centre provides publicity material and guidance.

Housing

15. **Bob Russell:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many council houses were built in the financial year 2003–04. [207373]

Keith Hill: The total number of social homes built in England during 2003–04 was 23,794. Of these, 182 were built by local authorities.

Correspondence

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he expects to respond to the letter of 20 December 2004 from the right hon. Member for Birkenhead about the Provisional Formula Grant Settlement for 2005–06 and how it affects Wirral local authority. [208001]

Mr. Raynsford: I replied to my right hon. Friend on 11 January 2005.

Disabled Facilities Grants

Mr. Swire: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if his Department will release additional funds to help county councils meet their obligations to pay disabled facilities grants. [207032]

Keith Hill: Specified capital grants paid by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to local authorities for disabled facilities grant (DFG) can only be paid to local housing authorities. I announced DFG allocations to local authorities for 2005–06 on 27 December 2004. Devon authorities received an increase in funding of 10 per cent. compared with allocations for 2004–05. Total funds available for the DFG programme in England have also been increased from £103.5 million in 2005–06 to £120.8 million p.a. in 2006–07 and 2007–08. Allocations to individual authorities for these years will be made later this year following completion of the interdepartmental review of the DFG programme which is currently under way.

Local Government Finance

Mr. Swire: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the percentage change in the environmental, protective and cultural services block of revenue support grant to district councils will be for 2005–06. [207033]

Mr. Raynsford: Revenue Support Grant is an unhypothecated block grant. This means that it is not possible to identify the amount of funding that authorities receive for a specific service. Shire districts' formula grant (i.e. Revenue Support Grant plus redistributed business rates) is calculated using the total of their Environmental, Protective and Cultural Services Formula Spending Share and their Capital Financing Formula Spending Share. The increase in formula grant under the provisional 2005–06 settlement on a like-for-like basis for shire districts is £59.797, or 4.0 per cent..

Under the provisional 2005–06 settlement, shire districts will receive an increase of £67.051 million, or 2.2 per cent., in their Environmental, Protective and Cultural Services Formula Spending Share on a like-for-like basis. Formula Spending Shares are neither grant nor are they the Government"s assessment of how much an authority should spend on a particular service.

Planning Policy Statement 6

Brian Cotter: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the meetings that have taken place between *(a)* Ministers and *(b)* officials of his Department and representatives of organisations representing small and independent retailers about Planning Policy Statement 6 (Town Centres) over the last 12 months. [207063]

Keith Hill: In May 2004 I and officials of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister met the British Retail Consortium. Among those present were representatives of the National Federation of Retail Newsagents. This meeting discussed a range of issues including draft Planning Policy Statement 6 (PPS6). In January 2004 I made a presentation on PPS6 to the All Party Parliamentary Group on Small Shops, at which representatives of organisations representing small and independent retailers were present.

In addition, during the course of Government business Ministers and their officials regularly attend conferences, seminars and events on retail planning matters at which representatives of organisations representing small and independent retailers are present and general matters of policy are discussed.

HOME DEPARTMENT

ASBOs

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many antisocial behaviour orders have been breached in each *(a)* month and *(b)* year since they were introduced; and what percentage of the total handed out this represented in each case. [205359]

Ms Blears: The available information is given in the table. Breach data are currently available for the period from June 2000 to December 2002. The figures are available yearly, they are not produced by month. Data up to 2002 show that two thirds of antisocial behaviour orders (ASBOs) are not breached. Breach and disposal (sentencing) data up to December 2003 will be available shortly.

Courts take ASBO breaches seriously. From Home Office data we know that a significant number of ASBO breaches result in immediate custody.

Number of ASBOs issued, as reported to the Home Office, and breached in each year, by period

	Number issued	Number breached (year of breach)	Number breached as a percentage of the number issued
2000[1]	135	14	10
2001	322	113	35
2002	403	178	44
Total 2000–2002	860	305	35

[1] From 1 June 2000. Data from 1 April 1999 to 31 May 2000 were collected, for the whole period, by police force area on aggregate numbers

Crimes Against Young People

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* discussion forums, *(b)* conferences and *(c)* focus groups his Department has held on reducing crime against young people since 2001. [200337]

Paul Goggins: Since 2001 the Home Office has held three focus groups with young people to discuss the ways in which crime impacts on them and how to reduce crime against young people. The Home Office was a partner in the Children and Young People's Unit's (now part of the Department for Education and Skills) major conference "Safely on our Streets" where young people voiced their opinions on four topic areas: alcohol, transport, victims of crime and mobile phone theft.

The Home Office has also held events to tackle specific types of crime against young people. The Home Secretary's Task Force on Child Protection on the Internet, established in 2001, meets on a quarterly basis with additional meetings of the taskforce subgroups and working parties taking place in a regular basis. A series of discussion forums have been held with young people about reducing the likelihood of them being victims of mobile phone theft. In August 2004 Ministers from the Home Office and Department for Education and Skill wrote to Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) encouraging them to hold workshops on youth robbery. Half have already done so, the other half are planning to. A conference on this issue on 4 October 2004 also included a workshop on youth robbery.

In addition to the discussion forums, conferences and focus groups held on crime reduction, other events have been organised to tackle antisocial behaviour and youth crime. For example an International Seminar on Youth Crime held in October 2002, examined the reduction of crime committed both by young people and against young people. Preparations for this included a meeting with the youth crime focus group and the organisation of a focus group in Huntercombe Youth Offenders Institute.

Criminal Records Bureau

Brian Cotter: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what the average time taken for the Criminal Records Bureau to approve individual volunteers was in the last period for which figures are available; [207034]

(2) what action he is taking to shorten the amount of time that staff and volunteers must wait before receiving clearance from the Criminal Records Bureau. [207035]

Ms Blears: No distinction is made by the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) in relation to the time taken to process an application received from a person from the voluntary sector and from an applicant who pays for his or her Disclosure.

The overall average for completed applications in November 2004, the last month for which figures are available, was 24.1 days. Breaking this down Standard Disclosures took an average of 12.9 days to complete and Enhanced Disclosures took 25.7 days. These figures may be compared against the Bureau's published service standards of completing 90 per cent. of Standard Disclosures within two weeks and 90 per cent. of Enhanced Disclosures within four weeks.

The CRB will never sacrifice the accuracy of its service for speed; however, the Bureau remains committed to improving the overall efficiency and effectiveness of its service.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department to what purposes the additional expenditure to be funded by the planned increase in his Department's budget for central services in 2005–06, as indicated on page 132 of the Home Office Annual Report 2003–04, will be put. [207692]

Fiona Mactaggart: The largest element of the reported increase in Central Services is £79 million for additional Accruing Superannuation Liability Charges (ASLC) to cover the cost of increased pension contributions, made by the Home Office, to the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (PCSPS). When financial allocations are finalised for 2005–06, these amounts will be disaggregated across all business areas.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the cost of refurbishments in his Department was in each year since 1997; and what the planned expenditure is for 2005–06. [205677]

Mr. Charles Clarke: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to the hon. Member for Buckingham (Mr. Bercow) on 5 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 382W. Figures before 1990–2000 can be supplied only at disproportionate cost. The additional figures are:

	£ million
1999–00	6.7
2000–01	35.2
2004–05	[1]3.0
2005–06	[2]—

[1] Anticipated out-turn.

[2] Not yet known.

Drug Testing and Treatment Orders

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many and what percentage of drug testing and treatment orders have been breached in each year since their introduction, broken down by local authority area. [205326]

Paul Goggins: It is not possible to calculate accurately the total number or percentage of orders breached in any one year. Some orders made in one year were breached in the following year; some cases are subject to multiple breach proceedings; some breach proceedings have been instigated and not yet dealt with by the courts; and 7,640 orders (30 per cent. of the orders made since roll-out) are still running. A completion target for Drug Testing and Treatment Orders (DTTO) of 35 per cent. was introduced from April 2004. The overall completion rate between April—October 2004 was 34 per cent. and each probation area's completion rate for the same period is shown in the table.

DTTO Completion performance 2004–05

Area name:	*Target achieved(percentage)*
Staffordshire	14
Warwickshire	36
West Mercia	34
West Midlands	40
West Midlands Region	34
County Durham	44
Northumbria	49
Teesside	34
North East Region	43
Bedfordshire	43
Cambridgeshire	47
Essex	22
Hertfordshire	25
Norfolk	19
Suffolk	37
East Region	31
Cheshire	28
Cumbria	41
Greater Manchester	35
Lancashire	34
Merseyside	47
North West Region	37
Derbyshire	42
Leicestershire and Rutland	40
Lincolnshire	48
Northamptonshire	24
Nottinghamshire	32
East Midlands Region	37
Humberside	32
North Yorkshire	15
South Yorkshire	23
West Yorkshire	23
Yorkshire and Humberside Region	24
Hampshire	31
Kent	22
Surrey	26
Sussex	38
Thames Valley	26
South East Region	29

	£ million
Avon and Somerset	26
Devon and Cornwall	32
Dorset	51
Gloucestershire	30
Wiltshire	21
South West Region	32
London East	21
London North	35
London South	53
London West	22
London Region	35
Dyfed/Powys	44
Gwent	41
North Wales	40
South Wales	38
Wales Region	40

Fixed Penalty Notices

Mr. Byrne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will set out the offences for which fixed penalty notices can be issued; and what guidance has been issued to authorities by his Department about circumstances in which such notices can be delivered. [206771]

Ms Blears: The penalty notice for disorder scheme was extended by the Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001 (Amendment) and Police Reform Act 2002 (Modification) Order 2004 (SI 2540/2004), made on 27 September this year, to add a further 10 offences to the existing 11 offences. A complete list of the offences and penalties is shown in the table.

Operational guidance is provided to the police on issuing penalty notices for disorder. This has been revised to take into account the new offences and will be published on the Home Office website shortly at: http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/crimpol/police/penalty/index.html

Copies of the revised police operational guidance will be placed in the Library at the same time.

Offence creating provision	*Description of offence*
Offences attracting £80 penalty	
Section 80 of the Explosives Act 1875(c.17)()	Throwing fireworks in a thoroughfare
Section 31 of the Fire Services Act 1947 (c.41)()	Knowingly giving a false alarm to a fire brigade
Section 169A of the Licensing Act 1964(c.26)	Sale of alcohol to a person under 18
Section 169C(2) and (3) of the Licensing Act 1964 (c.26)	Buying or attempting to buy alcohol for a person under 18
Section 169F of the Licensing Act 1964 (c.26)	Delivery of alcohol to a person under 18 or allowing such delivery
Section 5(2) of the Criminal Law Act1967(c.58)	Wasting police time or giving false report
Section 91 of the Criminal Justice Act 1 967 (c.80)	Disorderly behaviour while drunk in a public place
Section 1 of the Theft Act 1968 (c.60)	Theft
Section 1(1) of the Criminal Damage Act 1971 (c.48)	Destroying or damaging property
Section 5 of the Public Order Act1986 (c.64)	Behaviour likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress
Section 127(2) of the Communications Act 2003 (c.21)	Using a public electronic communications network in order to cause annoyance, inconvenience or needless anxiety
Section 11 of the Fireworks Act 2003 (c.22)	Contravention of a prohibition or failure to comply with a requirement imposed by or under fireworks regulations or making false statement.
Section 49 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 (C.21K)	Knowingly giving a false alarm to a person acting on behalf of a fire and rescue authority

Offence creating provision	*Description of offence*
Offences attracting £50 penalty	
Section 12 of the Licensing Act 1872 (c.94)	Being drunk in a highway, other public place or licensed premises
Section 55 of the British Transport Commission Act 1949 (c.xxix)	Trespassing on a railway
Section 56 of the British Transport Commission Act 1949 (c.xxix)	Throwing stones etc. at trains or other things on railways
Section 168E of the Licensing Act 1964 (c.26)	Consumption of alcohol by a person under 18 or allowing such consumption
Section 87 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (c.43)	Depositing and leaving litter
Section 12 of the Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001 (c.16)	Consumption of alcohol in designated public place

Identity Cards

Mr. Lilley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the source is of the figure that about 35 per cent. of terrorists use false or multiple identities, as referred to in the answer of 17 May 2004, *Official Report*, column 773W, to the hon. Member for Bognor Regis and Littlehampton (Mr. Gibb). [207467]

Mr. Browne *[holding answer 10 January 2005]*: During an oral evidence session to the Home Affairs Select Committee on 4 May 2004, the then Home Secretary my right hon. Friend, the Member for Sheffield, Brightside (Mr. Blunkett) said:

> "I have been very circumspect and I have indicated what the security services have said to me, which is they believe that in excess of a third of those who are engaged in supporting terrorism use multiple identities in order to be able to evade detection and to evade us being able to disrupt their activities."

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the likely size of the national identity register in *(a)* 2010, *(b)* 2020 and *(c)* 2030. [207623]

Mr. Browne: The current working assumption is that the following number of enrolments will be recorded on the National Identity Register at the end of the financial year which begins in:

	Number (million)
(a) 2010	11.3
(b) 2020	70.0
(c) 2030	111.3

The National Identity Register will continue to hold records of deceased persons and those who have registered and then left the country, to avoid fraudulent use of these identities.

Motoring Offences

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many convictions which have resulted in custodial sentences there have been for *(a)* drink-driving and *(b)* other motoring offences, broken down by (i) type and (ii) gender in each year since 1997; and what each figure represents as a percentage of the total. [204719]

Paul Goggins: Information taken from the Home Office court proceedings database on convictions and custodial sentences for drink-driving and other motoring offences by gender 1997 to 2002 (latest available) is given in tables, which have been placed in the Library. Data for 2003 will be available early in 2005.

National Offender Management Service

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representation the relevant trade unions have on the National Offender Management Service Board. [204892]

Paul Goggins: Having initially agreed to accept my invitation to join the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) Board, Ms Judy McKnight (General Secretary of NAPO) and Mr. Colin Moses (National Chairman of POA) recently announced their resignation.

I have made it clear that I strongly support regular and open dialogue with Trade Unions as part of the development of NOMS. The NOMS Joint Consultative Council (JCC) provides a forum for communication, discussion, consultation and information sharing between the NOMS and the Trade Unions representing staff within the National Probation Service, Her Majesty's Prison Service and the core Home Office on those issues that fall outside the remits of the existing service-specific consultation frameworks.

North Yorkshire Police

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 20 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1507W, to Question 205652, whether the £2.9 million is more than the authority would otherwise have received. [207525]

Ms Blears: If police formula grant had been calculated using the police funding formula without application of a grant floor, North Yorkshire Police Authority would have received £2.9 million less than the £75.4 million actually allocated under the provisional settlement. The settlement ensures that all police authorities receive a minimum increase of 3.75 per cent. in general grants next year.

Parole Board (Harry Roberts)

Mr. Grieve: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department for what reasons the parole board dealing with the application of Harry Roberts for parole heard evidence in secret to which neither Roberts nor his representatives had access. [207699]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 10 January 2005]*: The hearing of Mr. Roberts' case before a Parole Board panel has not yet taken place as a result of a series of judicial challenges over the non-disclosure of sensitive information in the parole dossier.

The first of those challenges was resolved on the basis of a consent order agreed by all parties that the question of non-disclosure to Mr. Roberts was a matter for the Parole Board. It was also agreed that the material in question should be disclosed to a Specially Appointed Advocate (SAA) who would act on the prisoner's behalf at a Directions hearing before the legal chairman of the Parole Board panel that was to hear Mr. Roberts' case. In May 2003, the chairman subsequently directed that the sensitive material should be disclosed only to the SAA.

Those decisions were then challenged on various grounds before the High Court in December 2003, at which Mr. Roberts was represented by the SAA in closed session. The Court of Appeal heard the case in July 2004. In dismissing the challenges on both occasions, the courts considered that the Parole Board had the inherent power and discretion under Section 32(3) of the Criminal Justice Act 1991 and the Parole Board Rules to adopt the necessary procedures to enable it to perform its risk assessment task. In Mr. Roberts' case, the courts held that the Parole Board's adoption of the SAA process, as a wholly exceptional measure in the circumstances of that case, was proportionate, correct and fair to Mr. Roberts.

Police Administrative Staff

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will seek to ensure that administrative staff working for police forces receive the same pay entitlement for working on public holidays as police officers, with particular reference to the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Police Force. [206215]

Ms Blears: The setting of pay and conditions is a matter for individual police authorities. Forces who are members of the Police Staff Council (PSC) agree to implement pay awards agreed at the PSC as a minimum, and to take full account of the PSC handbook when setting terms and conditions for police staff.

Prison Service (Sick Leave)

Mr. Gerrard: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average number of days sick leave for prison officers was in each prison region in England and Wales in the most recent year for which figures are available. [201620]

Paul Goggins: The average number of working days lost due to sickness absence among all public sector prison officer grades for 2003–04 is contained in the following table.

Information on sickness absence within specific grades for privately managed establishments is considered commercial in confidence and is therefore not available.

Geographic area	*Working days lost per officer 2003–04*
East Midlands (north)	13.8
East Midlands (south)	11.9
Eastern	13.7
Kent	17.8
London	17.4
North East	12.6
North West	19.6
South West	17.3
Surrey and Sussex	16.4
Thames Valley and Hampshire	15.5
Wales	8.2
West Midlands	14.1
Yorkshire and Humberside	13.0
All establishments	15.3
Prison service total	13.3

Prisons

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) who is carrying out the survey to identify suitable sites for new, large prisons; and what the terms and conditions of the survey are; [201067]

(2) if he will list the sites available in *(a)* London, *(b)* the South East, *(c)* the West Midlands, *(d)* the North West and *(e)* Wales where new, large prisons could be located. [201068]

Paul Goggins: The Prison Service, acting on behalf of the National Offender Management Service, is responsible for the survey. The purpose of the survey is to identify suitable sites in urban areas, which can serve their local communities and are of a size commensurate with the type of prison required in that area.

The results of the survey are being analysed and further evaluation will take place before any offers or negotiations commence. The size and function of new prison establishments is determined by the size and mix of the projected population.

The details of the sites cannot be disclosed at this stage for commercial reasons.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which private prison companies the Commissioner for Correctional Services has met in the last 12 months. [203027]

Paul Goggins: The Chief Executive for the National Offender Management Service, Mr. Martin Narey, has in the last 12 months met with a range of companies responsible for running prisons both here and in the United States.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department who owns the land on which each London prison is built. [203028]

Paul Goggins: My right hon. Friend the Home Secretary, Secretary of State for the Home Department, owns the freehold of the land for the London prisons of: Belmarsh, Brixton, Feltham, Holloway, Latchmere House, Pentonville, Wandsworth, Wormwood Scrubs, and also the private prison site of Bronzefield (Ashford, Middlesex).

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will list the sites in Yorkshire that have been considered for the building of new prison establishments; [204419]

(2) which sites in the Elmet constituency have been identified as potential sites for a new prison establishment; and when the decision on whether to build a new prison in Elmet will be taken. [204420]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 13 December 2004]:* A number of potential new sites are currently under consideration in Yorkshire. No final decision on location has yet been made and I am unable to confirm at this stage when such a decision will be taken.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what *(a)* the target and *(b)* the actual number of drug rehabilitation places available in each prison in England and Wales is. [203023]

Paul Goggins: The locally-agreed targets for the number of drug rehabilitation programme places (entrants) available during 2004–05, as well as the total number of prisoners who have already entered between 1 April 2004 and 6 December 2004, are shown in the following table.

On current performance, it is envisaged that by 31 March 2005, delivery will be in line with the locally-agreed target total of 7,885—exceeding the National Key Performance Target of 6,500.

Drug rehabilitation programmes—Places (Entrants)

Establishment	*Target for 2004–05*	*Total entrants as at 6 December 2004*
Acklington	85	69
Albany	0	0
Altcourse	80	11
Altcourse	72	26
Ashfield	60	10
Ashwell	84	59
Askham Grange	0	0
Aylesbury	48	20
Bedford	216	156
Belmarsh	0	0
Birmingham	80	84
Birmingham	40	11
Blakenhurst	80	24
Blantyre House	0	0
Blundeston	36	24
Blundeston	0	0
Brinsford	0	0
Bristol	100	72
Brixton	60	49
Brixton	120	97
Brockhill	0	0
Bronzefield	0	0
Buckley Hall	0	0
Bullingdon	180	66
Bullingdon	40	0
Bullwood Hall (F)	60	39
Camp Hill	16	12
Canterbury	12	0
Cardiff	48	36
Castington	30	10
Channings Wood	130	77
Chelmsford	60	36
Coldingley	100	61
Cookham Wood	24	0
Dartmoor	72	48
Deerbolt	40	20
Doncaster	80	12
Dorchester	40	11
Dovegate	0	0
Dover	0	0
Downview (F)	0	0
Drake Hall (F)	85	50
Durham	36	10
East Sutton Park	0	0
Eastwood Park	0	0
Edmunds Hill	90	42
Edmunds Hill	0	0
Elmley	144	108
Erlestoke	74	27
Everthorpe	36	0
Everthorpe	75	48
Exeter	180	119
Featherstone	36	0
Feltham	0	0
Ford	40	0
Forest Bank	80	0
Foston Hall	0	0
Frankland	15	10
Full Sutton	15	10
Garth	40	35
Gartree	36	24
Glen Parva	80	59
Glen Parva	100	30
Gloucester	74	54
Grendon	0	0
Guys Marsh	72	57
Haslar	0	0
Haverigg	72	47
Hewell Grange	0	0
High Down	36	0
Highpoint	96	47
Hindley	60	24
Hollesley Bay	60	0
Holloway (F)	40	10
Holme House	85	88
Holme House	40	0
Hull	40	0
Huntercombe (J)	0	0
Kingston	12	0
Kirkham	36	12
Kirklevington	0	0
Lancaster	60	36
Lancaster	72	39
Lancaster Farms	30	0
Latchmere House	0	0
Leeds	96	60
Leicester	40	11
Lewes	64	12
Leyhill	50	35
Lincoln	36	0
Lindholme	144	86
Littlehey	65	41
Liverpool	72	58
Long Lartin	15	10
Low Newton	88	56
Lowdham Grange	60	60
Maidstone	48	60
Manchester	40	24
Moorland	88	44
Morton Hall	0	0
Mount	96	69
New Hall	96	70
North Sea Camp	0	0
Northallerton	30	0
Norwich	128	58
Nottingham	120	86
Nottingham	76	89
Onley	32	0
Parc	125	89
Parkhurst	16	0

Drug rehabilitation programmes—Places (Entrants)

Establishment	*Target for 2004–05*	*Total entrants as at 6 December 2004*
Pentonville	120	69
Pentonville	40	12
Portland	30	0
Preston	80	0
Ranby	54	42
Ranby	36	24
Reading	48	51
Risley	90	75
Rochester	75	40
Rye Hill	0	0
Send (F)	60	41
Shepton Mallet	0	0
Shrewsbury	0	0
Stafford	96	59
Standford Hill	0	0
Stocken	72	72
Stoke Heath	30	0
Styal	90	56
Styal	0	0
Sudbury	0	0
Swaleside	100	53
Swansea	74	23
Swansea	40	24
Swinfen Hall	80	41
Thorn Cross	30	10
Usk Prescoed	0	0
Verne	74	50
Wakefield	15	10
Wandsworth	96	29
Warren Hill (J)	60	45
Wayland	96	59
Wealstun	75	73
Wealstun	0	0
Weare	40	12
Wellingborough	36	0
Werrington (J)	0	0
Wetherby	0	0
Whatton	0	0
Whitemoor	15	17
Winchester	36	0
Winchester	40	0
Wolds	0	0
Woodhill	40	0
Wormwood Scrubs	60	49
Wormwood Scrubs	120	96
Wymott	72	56
Total	7885	4332

Sentencing

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the impact the Sentencing Guidelines Council is likely to have on the size of the *(a)* probation and *(b)* prisons caseload over the next five financial years. [202688]

Paul Goggins: The overall impact of the guidelines should be greater consistency and effectiveness in sentencing. It is, however, too early to make firm numeric assessments of the impact.

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will bring forward plans to ensure that the courts impose a fine or community sentence as the first option for most non-violent offences. [204478]

Paul Goggins: The Government have made it clear that prison should be reserved for the most serious, dangerous and persistent offenders, and that community sentences are an effective alternative to short-term imprisonment for less serious, non-violent offenders. It is for the Sentencing Guidelines Council to provide guidelines to the courts on seriousness and the starting points for offences.

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what provision the Government makes to assist women to fulfil community sentences, with particular reference to child care. [206285]

Paul Goggins: Many local probation areas have developed their own strategies to ensure that women are able to fulfil community sentences. Such policies include supporting access to childcare provision registered with the local authority.

The National Probation Directorate is currently developing a national policy for work with women offenders which will be issued in 2005, after consultation.

The National Probation Service recognises that providing community sentences to women offenders raises issues which must be addressed in order to ensure equality of provision.

Most offending behaviour programmes (excluding sex offender and domestic abuse programmes) are accessible to female offenders and have materials appropriately adapted. The National Probation Service has also developed one programme specifically designed for women offenders. Some probation areas are able to deliver programmes to women only groups.

When implementing community punishment orders, probation areas take into account the particular needs of female offenders, including childcare, in the type of placement and the hours of work.

Sex Abuse (Historical Cases)

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how the changes to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme in 2001 affected prisoners who were victims of historical sex abuse. [207323]

Paul Goggins: The changes made to the Tariff Scheme in 2001 included an increase of about 10 per cent. in tariff bands 7–23 inclusive, higher awards in sex cases, higher awards for serious multiple injuries, some re-ordering and re-wording of several injury descriptions (including many of those for physical and sexual abuse), and the addition of a number of new injury descriptions.

All successful applicants submitting claims after these changes came into force, including prisoners who were victims of historical sex abuse, would have benefited from these improvements. But the basic eligibility criteria and the interpretation of the Scheme rules by the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority remained substantially unchanged, and the 2001 changes are not thought therefore to have had any other effect on the group in question.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the factors underlying the take-up rate of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme in historical child abuse cases. [207512]

Paul Goggins: No such assessment has been made; nor is any planned.

Suicide

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many suicides there have been in each month of 2004; and what the figures were each month in the last two years. [201035]

Paul Goggins: The number of apparently self-inflicted deaths in English and Welsh prisons in each month, January 2002-December 2004, is shown in the following table:

	2002	*2003*	*2004*
January	7	13	10
February	7	9	12
March	5	8	7
April	8	7	7
May	9	7	8
June	8	7	6
July	5	7	6
August	12	4	14
September	11	8	8
October	9	5	9
November	5	13	5
December	9	6	3

Note:

The Prison Service employs the term self-inflicted death rather than suicide. This includes all those deaths where it appears the prisoner has acted specifically to take his/her own life.

Reducing the rate of self-inflicted deaths in prison establishments is a key priority. As the hon. Member is aware, I made an announcement on 31 March 2004 about the Prison Service's suicide prevention strategy. This will link existing programmes and planned investment in five broad areas of work:

Regime, activities and care-planning for all prisoners

Improved knowledge and outlooks of all staff at all levels

Meeting the special needs of the most vulnerable prisoners

Training and support for staff

Design solutions to minimise impulsive acts.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

All-seater Stadiums

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what representations she has recently received regarding the relaxation of the requirements for Premier League and First Division football grounds to be all-seater; and if she will make a statement. [207726]

Mr. Caborn: In September 2004 the Department received representations from Peter Caton, Campaign Co-ordinator of the Stand Up Sit Down campaign asking the Government to consider their proposals for the reintroduction of standing at Premier League and First Division football matches.

The Department has also received a number of letters from Members of Parliament following representations they have received from their constituents asking the Government to consider the Stand Up Sit Down proposals.

Having carefully considered the Stand Up Sit Down solutions, it is clear that these measures would run against the Government's current policy that football grounds in the top two divisions shall be all-seated. There is also a concern that the proposal would seek to introduce standing accommodation without the safeguards that are currently required on standing terraces in the lower divisions.

The all-seater policy has been in place since 1991, following Lord Justice Taylor's report into the Hillsborough disaster. Lord Taylor summarised his position by saying that there is no cure-all solution that will achieve complete safety and solve all problems to do with crowd behaviour and control. However he was satisfied that seating does more to achieve those objectives than any other measure.

Following a pre-election commitment, the Government reviewed the all-seater policy in consultation with the Football Licensing Authority (FLA) in 1997. That review concurred with Lord Taylor's conclusion that seated accommodation is demonstrably safer than standing accommodation, regardless of how the stadium is configured.

The FLA's figures for injuries at UK stadia over recent seasons consistently show that spectators are approximately twice as likely to be injured at grounds where standing is permitted, compared to all-seater stadia.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what recent requests she has received from organisations requesting a meeting to discuss legislation relating to seating at football matches; and if she will make a statement. [207762]

Mr. Caborn: In September 2004 the Department received representations from Peter Caton, Campaign Co-ordinator of the Stand Up Sit Down campaign offering to meet the Department to discuss their proposals for the reintroduction of standing at football matches.

The Department has carefully considered the Stand Up Sit Down proposals in consultation with the Football Licensing Authority (FLA) which is one of the Department's sponsored bodies and is our advisor on matters of safety at football grounds.

I understand that the FLA has agreed to meet Mr. Caton to discuss the proposals further.

It is right that the Government should consider any representations made regarding standing at football matches. As Lord Taylor recognised, the debate about the virtues of seating at football matches is a controversial one and must be approached with sensitivity and an open mind.

However, it remains the Government's position that the grounds of the clubs in the top two divisions of football should remain all-seated.

Ambient Gambling

Dr. Pugh: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what definition the Department uses of ambient gambling. [207293]

Mr. Caborn: The Gambling Bill does not utilise the concept of ambient gambling as such, which was defined in paragraph 3.21 of the Budd report as the provision of gambling facilities on premises whose main purpose is not gambling.

Dr. Pugh: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assessment the Department has made of the risk of gambling addiction from *(a)* ambient gambling and *(b)* gambling from the home. [207297]

Mr. Caborn: We do not have the necessary evidence to make such a general assessment, bearing in mind that both forms of gambling cover a wide range of gambling activities.

Free TV Licences (Dagenham)

Jon Cruddas: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many households in each ward of the Dagenham constituency are entitled to free television licences. [207262]

Estelle Morris: TV Licensing, who administer free television licences for people aged 75 or over as agents for the BBC, are not able to provide geographical breakdowns of the number of free licences issued. The number of households with at least one person aged 75 or over claiming the winter fuel payment in the Dagenham constituency in 2003–04 was 5,155, according to Department for Work and Pensions records. Winter fuel payment data at ward level relate to Census wards rather than electoral wards and consequently do not correspond precisely to constituency boundaries.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Spam E-mails

Mr. Flight: To ask the Chairman of the Information Committee what steps have been taken since 16 June to protect hon. Members, peers and their staff against spam e-mails; and if he will make a statement. [206967]

Mr. Key: Since June 2004 a new e-mail filtering service has been in operation. This third party service scans all inbound e-mails and blocks those that are found to contain viruses or content known to be Spam. During the first six months of operation 11,439,431 e-mails were scanned. Of these, 4,982,447 (43.55 per cent.) were found to be Spam and 991,491 (8.66 per cent.) to contain viruses. Intended recipients are notified when e-mails have been blocked and can check those judged to be Spam if they wish to do so. Based on customer feedback received to date, the service is working very well.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Departmental Equipment

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many items of electrical equipment were used by his Department in the last year for which figures are available, broken down by *(a)* cost and *(b)* number of each type of item. [205726]

Maria Eagle: The information requested is not recorded centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. All expenditure on electrical items is made in accordance with departmental guidance on financial procedures and propriety, based on principles set out in Government Accounting.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much has been spent by his Department on lighting in each year since 1997. [205865]

Maria Eagle: It is not possible to separate the amount we have spent on lighting from other electricity costs. All electricity expenditure is made in accordance with departmental guidance on financial procedures and propriety, based on principles set out in Government Accounting.

Pay Television Subscriptions

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many pay television subscriptions the Department had in each year since 1997; and what the cost was in each year. [207670]

Maria Eagle: Information to answer this question is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether the contracts signed by his special advisers differ from the Model Contract for Special Advisers. [207235]

Maria Eagle: All DWP Special Adviser contracts which set out their terms and conditions of service are based on the Model Contract for Special Advisers.

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

Education Unit

Mr. Lazarowicz: To ask the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire, representing the House of Commons Commission, how many pupils and students took part in visits to the House of Commons arranged by the House's Education Unit during the 2003–04 parliamentary Session, broken down by (i) region and nation of the UK and (ii) primary, secondary, and tertiary sector. [206423]

Sir Archy Kirkwood: In the 2003–04 Session the Parliamentary Education Unit (the unit is a shared service representing both the House of Commons and the House of Lords) welcomed groups as follows:

Region	Autumn visits	Citizenship (Primary)	Citizenship (Secondary)	Discover Parliament	Student (Mock) Parliament	Special Schools (Secondary)	Overall total
South East	118	28	10	19	18	12	205
South West	6	3	1	2	2	2	16
East Anglia	26	0	2	7	8	0	43
West Midlands	12	4	1	1	0	1	19
East Midlands	9	2	0	0	0	0	11
North East	3	0	0	0	2	0	5
North West	8	0	1	1	2	0	12
Yorks and Humberside	5	0	1	0	0	0	6
Scotland	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Wales	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Northern Ireland	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
Number of schools	188	56		30	32	15	338
Primary	0	39	—	0	0	0	39
Secondary	188	—	17	30	32	15	282
Total number students	5,979	1,248	544	960	512	525	9,768

In the same period the Central Tours Office arranged visits for 48,000 pupils and students. All of the visits programmes offered by the Education Unit were fully booked for the academic year 2004–05 by mid October 2004.

Postal Services

Kate Hoey: To ask the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire, representing the House of Commons Commission, for what reason the House authorities have decided to put out to tender the postal services of the House. [206753]

Sir Archy Kirkwood: Postal services on the parliamentary estate have never been subject to a formal competitive tender and it was recognised that this was in breach of EU directives, and could attract legal challenge from other suppliers and from the EU Commission itself.

Royal Mail advised the House in October 2003 that, following their own internal review of mail services supplied to Parliament, they were seeking to increase costs by over 200 per cent. just to maintain the status quo. Parliament has a duty to protect the public purse and justifying such a significant price increase while seeking an exemption from the competitive process was not sustainable.

Given these facts it was decided that a tendering exercise was essential to ensure value for money for the taxpayer and to comply with EU regulations. It was necessary to advertise the mail service in OJEU and this was done in February 2004. Four firms (including Royal Mail) have been shortlisted to receive invitations to tender early in 2005.

CABINET OFFICE

Asylum Seekers (Targets)

Alistair Burt: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what involvement the No. 10 Delivery Unit had in the *(a)* setting and *(b)* monitoring of targets relating to the removal of refused asylum seekers from the UK from 1999 to 2002. [206177]

Mr. Miliband: The Prime Minister's Delivery Unit was established in June 2001. It played no part in the setting of Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets prior to that date.

Overall responsibility for setting PSA targets lies with Her Majesty's Treasury (HMT) and relevant departments. The Delivery Unit contributes to the process by providing advice on the design, measurement and monitoring of PSAs. This was the role the Unit played as part of the Spending Review 2002.

The asylum PSA targets are among those for which the Delivery Unit has a continuing role in monitoring performance.

Progress against the delivery of PSA targets is available on HMT's website at: http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/performance/

Public Engagements

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office if he will list his public engagements fulfilled in each month since September. [204874]

Mr. Miliband *[holding answer 20 December 2004]*: My right hon. Friend, the former Minister for the Cabinet Office (Ruth Kelly), carried out the following public engagements between September and 15 December 2004.

12 October 2004—Speech to the Alliance for Digital Inclusion.

26 October 2004—Keynote address at the Pharmacy Business Awards dinner.

9 November 2004—Speech to the Institute for Public Policy Research at the University of London.

15 December 2004—Speech to the Institute for Public Policy Research's Public Services Forum.

Regulatory Accountability Panel

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office on how many occasions the Prime Minister's Panel for Regulatory Accountability has met since March; which regulations likely to impose a significant cost to business have been scrutinised by the panel; and which regulatory proposals have been *(a)* rejected and *(b)* delayed by the panel. [203888]

Mr. Miliband: We do not disclose information relating to the proceedings of the Cabinet and its committees.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office on how many occasions between 31 March 2002 and

31 March 2003 his special advisers travelled abroad in an official capacity; what places were visited; and how much each visit cost. [207763]

Mr. Miliband: In the financial year 2002–03, Cabinet Office special advisers did not make any visits overseas in an official capacity.

Working Time Regulations

Mr. Brady: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many officials working in ministerial private offices in the Department have worked more than a 48 hour week at any time in the last 12 months for which figures are available; how many of those had signed a waiver under working time regulations; and what percentage these figures represented of the total in each case. [204150]

Mr. Miliband: The Working Time Regulations provide workers with the protection of a limit of an average of 48 hours a week working time. This is not an absolute cap of 48 hours in any one week. This average is normally calculated over a 17-week reference period, although this can be longer in certain situations (26 weeks) and can be extended by agreement (up to 52 weeks). Workers may choose to work more than 48 hours per week over this reference period by signing an opt-out agreement, but employers cannot force a worker to sign an opt-out, and workers cannot be subjected to detriment for refusing to sign an opt-out.

The Cabinet Office has two officials working in ministerial private offices who have signed a waiver under the working time regulations.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Sexual Health

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many newly-acquired acute sexually-transmitted infections, including HIV and AIDS *(a)* were recorded in 2003 and *(b)* have been recorded to date in 2004 in the Province. [206340]

Angela Smith: The number of newly acquired acute sexually transmitted infections, including HIV and AIDS that *(a)* were recorded in 2003 and *(b)* have been recorded to date in 2004 in the Province are shown in the table below. Information is based on the initial contacts at Genito-urinary medicine (GUM) clinics in Northern Ireland.

	Number of newly acquired acute sexually transmitted infections
2003	9,197
2004	4,743

Notes:

Information for 2003 covers the time period 1 January to 31 December 2003. Information for 2004, from 1 January 2004 until 30 September, is incomplete; as not all returns have been submitted at this point in time therefore this figure is provisional.

Breast Screening

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many additional staff have been recruited to assist with the increased level of breast screening resulting from widening the age range for screening in the Province. [206128]

Angela Smith: The Department aims to have the extended breast screening programme implemented in 2006. In the meantime a total of 2.1 (whole time equivalents) additional radiographers have been recruited to expand the capacity of the system, in order to accommodate the screening of women in the 65–70 age group.

Clinical Negligence

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many clinical negligence cases are pending within each health trust in the Province. [206351]

Angela Smith: At 30 November 2004, the number of cases pending in each Trust was as follows:

Trust	*Number of cases*
Altnagelvin Hospitals HSS Trust	238
Armagh and Dungannon HSS Trust	45
Belfast City Hospital Trust HSS Trust	290
Causeway HSS Trust	60
Craigavon and Banbridge Community HSS Trust	8
Craigavon Area Hospital Group HSS Trust	168
Down Lisburn HSS Trust	159
Foyle HSS Trust	21
Green Park HSS Trust	51
Homefirst Community HSS Trust	13
Mater Hospital HSS Trust	99
Newry and Mourne HSS Trust	103
Northern Ireland Ambulance Service HSS Trust	3
North and West Belfast HSS Trust	7
Royal Group of Hospitals and Dental Hospital HSS Trust	558
South and East Belfast HSS Trust	10
Sperrin Lakeland HSS Trust	131
United Hospitals HSS Hospital Trust	237
Ulster Community and Hospitals HSS Trust	272

Departmental Conferences

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) how much has been spent by each of the Northern Ireland Departments on *(a)* rent or hire of accommodation for staff conferences and *(b)* overnight stays in hotels for staff in each year since 1997; [207739]

(2) how many staff conferences have been organised by each of the Northern Ireland Departments in each year since 1997; and at what total cost; [207740]

(3) how many civil servants in each of the Northern Ireland Government Departments have attended staff conferences involving an overnight stay in each year since 1997. [207741]

Mr. Pearson: The information requested is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Health Care Funding

Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much of the £214 million increase in health care funding in 2003–04 has been provided for *(a)* meeting inflation, *(b)* improving staff terms and conditions of employment, *(c)* changes in policy on charging for some services and *(d)* planned service developments. [206385]

Angela Smith: The DHSSPS budget uplift for 2003–04 amounted to some £214 million for Healthcare, Personal Social Care, Fire Service and Food Standards Agency. This included:

(a) £66 million—to meet pay and price inflation,

(b) £23 million—to improve terms and conditions for staff including the Consultants New Contract, the Junior Doctors Working Time Directive and the new GP Contract;.

(c) Specific monies were not made available to address changes in policy on charging for some services.

(d) £39 million—for planned service developments.

Hospital-acquired Infection

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much was spent in the Province in the last year for which figures are available on products to combat MRSA. [205956]

Angela Smith: It is not possible to distinguish products purchased to combat MRSA from those to combat other pathogens. However information received from Trusts indicates that hospitals are spending around £83,000 annually altogether on products such as alcohol gels and antiseptic wipes which are regarded as crucial in combating MRSA. In addition a considerable amount of expenditure occurs in hospitals on infection control activity and products to deal with all types of pathogens.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what representations he has received regarding new products for combating MRSA in hospitals. [205957]

Angela Smith: My Department has recorded no particular representations regarding new products for combating MRSA in hospitals.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many cases of MRSA were detected at each hospital in the Province in each of the last 12 months. [206347]

Angela Smith: Data on MRSA bacteraemia rates is collected, collated and analysed by the Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre (CDSC) on a quarterly basis.

The following table covers the four quarters ending June 2004.

Episodes of MRSA bacteraemia reported by acute trusts in Northern Ireland by quarter: July 2003—June 2004

	Quarter			
Trust name	*July to September 2003*	*October to December 2003*	*January to March 2004*	*April to June 2004*
Altnagelvin hospital	4	6	10	8
Belfast City hospital	15	17	18	9
Causeway	2	2	3	1
Craigavon Area hospital group	5	12	7	8
Down Lisburn	2	2	5	4
Green Park healthcare	2	1	1	1
Mater Infirmorum	7	6	4	0
Newry and Mourne	1	4	2	0
Royal group of hospitals	12	10	13	6
Sperrin Lakeland	6	1	7	5
Ulster community and hospitals	7	4	2	12
United hospitals	9	10	13	10
Total	72	75	85	64

Data for April to June 2004 are provisional. Data quoted do not take account of the activity rates of each trust. Further data and background information on this mandatory surveillance is available at: http://www.cdscni.org.uk/publications/AnnualReports/pdf/3rd%20report%20MRSA%20Blood%20Cultures%20NI.pdf

Medication (Adverse Reactions)

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will estimate the *(a)* costs incurred and *(b)* total bed days in the Province resulting from adverse reactions to medications in the 2004–05 financial year. [206341]

Angela Smith: The episodes arising in a hospital day case or inpatient environment which were specifically identified as including adverse reactions to medication cost some £2.2 million in the 2002–03 financial year, with related bed-days of some 19,300. This may not reflect the complete cost for all treatments resulting from adverse reactions to medications as these may not have been specifically identified within the hospital coding system and, furthermore, the above cost does not include related treatments in primary, community and outpatient settings.

Nursing

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether an individual in the Province has responsibility for promoting nursing as a career. [205971]

Angela Smith: Responsibility for promoting nursing as a career is shared corporately within the profession across all care sectors and does not rest with an individual in the Province. In leading and advising on nursing policy development and implementation, the Chief Nursing Officer and her team promote nursing.

Education Providers and HPSS employers collaborate on promoting nursing as an exciting and challenging profession and in particular target school leavers and careers teachers with this information. The DHSSPS through its commissioning processes encourage and support this activity.

Smoking

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he is taking to tackle the level of smoking among young females in the Province. [206126]

Angela Smith: The Five Year Tobacco Action Plan, published in June 2003, provides a platform for inter-agency collaboration on tobacco control. The plan identifies children and young people as a key target group and we continue to work with Health and Social Services Boards, the Health Promotion Agency, the Department of Education, the voluntary sector and others to discourage all young people from starting to smoke and to help young smokers quit.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Conferences

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many conferences were *(a)* attended by officials from the Department, *(b)* cancelled by and *(c)* facilitated by the Department in each year since 1997; and what the (i) cost to the Department and (ii) location was in each case. [205752]

Mr. Lammy: This information is not held centrally in my Department and therefore could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Equipment

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many items of electrical equipment were used by the Department in the last year for which figures are available, broken down by *(a)* cost and *(b)* number of each type of item. [205728]

Mr. Lammy: The last year that figures are available for my Department is 2004. However, they relate only to the number of items of electrical equipment were in use and are not broken down by *(a)* cost or *(b)* the number of each type of item. Further, they relate to DCA HQ and Associated Offices only, and exclude the Court Service, which does not hold this information centrally and cannot provide the information without incurring disproportionate costs.

The question is not specific as to whether the response should include only small electrical items or whether it covers a wider scope including items of plant, servers, lighting installations or air conditioning. As a result, this answer has been prepared using the Portable Appliance Testing records for 2004 which includes all moveable items but excludes items of plant. I believe that this provides us with the most accurate response possible from the information available. The total number of electrical items in use, in my Department in 2004 was 21,410.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how much has been spent by his Department on *(a)* indoor bought plants, *(b)* indoor hired plants, *(c)* outdoor bought plants and *(d)* outdoor hired plants in each year since 1997. [205598]

Mr. Lammy: This response relates to the DCA HQ Estate and Associated offices only since the Court Service does not hold any records on this centrally and would have to incur a disproportionate cost to collect the information. Further, the DCA HQ only holds records for the last two years and would incur a disproportionate cost in searching all invoiced records since 1997.

In the last two years, The DCA HQ estate has spent the following amounts on plants:

£

	(a)	*(b)*	*(c)*	*(d)*
2003–04	1,0350	5,399	0	0
2004–05[1]	6,360	18,115	0	0

[1] *Note:*
To December 2004.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how much has been spent by his Department on *(a)* new furniture and *(b)* hired furniture in each year since 1997. [205608]

Mr. Lammy: My Department has spent the following amounts on furniture in the last 4 years. No central figures are held from prior to 2001 and to obtain them would incur a disproportionate cost.

Further, this response is based on the DCA HQ Estate and associated offices only since the Court Service is unable to gather this information without disproportionate cost.

£

	New furniture	*Hired furniture*
2001–2002	527,000	0
2002–2003	640,000	0
2003–2004	1,719,000	0
2004–2005[1]	775,000	0

[1] To December 2004

For the purposes of this question, furniture has been assumed to include: desks, chairs, pedestals, conference furniture, cupboards, general office storage and high density and mobile storage. The question has been answered in accordance with Cabinet Office Round Robin Guidance (issued 5 January, 2005).

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how much the Department spent on lawyers in each year since 1997; how many *(a)* actions, *(b)* settlements and *(c)* court cases there were in each year; and what the costs were of each settlement. [206458]

Mr. Leslie: Most litigation brought by or against the Department is handled by the Treasury Solicitor. The Department paid the following amounts in respect of litigation matters handled by the Treasury Solicitor for the period 1997 to date.

Financial year	*Number of cases worked on by the Treasury Solicitor during the year*[1]	*Fees and disbursements billed to the Department by the Treasury Solicitor (£)*
1997–98	159	257,095.61
1998–99	207	468,320.56
1999–2000	218	561,075.75
2000–01	223	522,990.29
2001–02	243	667,695.38
2002–03	269	630,551.13
2003–04	269	675,760.62
2004–05	230	782,364.64

[1] These are the number of litigation matters worked on and billed to the Department by the Treasury Solicitor during the financial year and not necessarily new litigation matters started during that year.

These figures do not include (i) the Treasury Solicitor's fees for providing legal advice not related to litigation, (ii) fees incurred by external legal advisers for either litigation or non-litigation related work, (iii) damages and costs paid to successful litigants in matters brought against the Department and (iv) fees incurred by counsel where the Department has instructed counsel direct on non-litigation matters.

The Department does not have the information readily to hand to answer questions *(a)*, *(b)* and *(c)*. Collating this information would involve looking at each individual litigation file and, given the number of files involved each year, to conduct this exercise would involve disproportionate cost. The figures given in the table will include cases that have been resolved before the commencement of court proceedings, those that have been resolved by the parties during the course of court proceedings and those that have been determined by the court.

Departmental Properties

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many properties are held by the Department; what total floor space these properties provide; how many properties are vacant; and how much floor space vacant properties comprise. [206492]

Mr. Lammy: The Court Service currently holds 381 properties of which 138 are freehold. The total floor space comprises 801,377 square metres. There are currently six properties that are vacant of which three are freehold. The total floor space comprises 12,059 square metres.

There are 10 properties on the DCA headquarters estate (including the Welsh office) of which one is a freehold. The total floor space comprises 50,364 square metres. There are no vacant properties on the DCA headquarters estate.

Parental Contact Orders

Mrs. May: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs (1) what the average length of time has been between the issuing of a contact order for parental rights under the Children Act 1989 and the case being listed for a first conciliation/direction appointment in the last 12 months; [207311]

(2) how many cases of disputed contact were dealt with by the family courts in *(a)* 2001, *(b)* 2002 and *(c)* 2003; [207463]

(3) what guidance he has issued on whether women's refuges constitute adequate accommodation for children when considering awarding of custody in disputed custody cases. [207317]

Mr. Lammy: Information on the average length of time between an application for a contact order under the Children Act 1989, and the case being listed for a first conciliation/direction appointment is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. However, work is under way to explore whether and how this information might be gathered in the future.

Section 1 (2) of the Children Act 1989 states that

> "In any proceedings in which any question with respect to the upbringing of a child arises, the court shall have regard to the general principal that any delay in determining the question is likely to prejudice the child".

The President of the Family Division has given guidance to family judges to aim for a first hearing dispute resolution appointment within four to six weeks of the application.

The number of contact orders made in each year in all tiers of court (magistrates courts, county courts and High Court) were:

	Number
(a) 2001	55,030
(b) 2002	61,356
(c) 2003	67,184

Information on how many of these cases were disputed is not collected. However, a substantial majority of contact orders are made in county courts and in 2002–03 approximately 30 per cent. of those contact orders were made with consent.

No guidance has been issued by my Department to the courts on whether women's refuges constitute adequate accommodation for children when considering awarding of custody in disputed custody cases.

Section 1 (3) of the Children Act 1989 lists the issues that must be considered in relation to the child's welfare. This includes

> "his physical, emotional and educational needs"

and

> "how capable each of his parents, and any other person in relation to whom the court considers the question relevant of meeting his needs".

Sex Abuse (Historical Cases)

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many and what percentage of convictions quashed by the Court of Appeal in each of the last five years were historical sex abuse cases. [207508]

Mr. Leslie: The Criminal Appeal Office does not hold electronic records which differentiate between recent or historical sexual abuse cases. In 2004 the Court of Appeal quashed 66 convictions in cases involving sexual offences and, in some cases, retrials were ordered. The figures for the preceding years were 56 cases in 2003, 52 cases in 2002, 42 cases in 2001 and 53 cases in 2000. The percentage of those which involve historical abuse could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Stolen Property

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many civil servants from his Department have *(a)* faced disciplinary proceedings as a result of allegations of theft, *(b)* been charged with theft and *(c)* been dismissed following theft allegations in each year since 1997. [206393]

Mr. Lammy: Information about cases related to theft is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate costs.

Travel Costs

Andrew Selous: To ask the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the total travel costs to his Department have been for *(a)* Ministers, *(b)* special advisers and *(c)* officials for each year since 1997. [203771]

Mr. Lammy : *[holding answer 8 December, 2004]*: *(a)* It is not possible to list the travel costs of each Minister within the Department without incurring disproportionate cost. However, aggregate travel and subsistence costs for the Private Offices, which covers costs for Ministers and Officials, was as per the following table:

Period	*Amount (£)*
2004–05 (to November 04)	47,659
2003–04	64,891
2002–03	83,051
2001–02	60,220
2000–01	98,592
1999–00	59,823
1998–99	40,192

Information on previous years is not readily available.

In respect of overseas travel by Ministers, since 1999 the Government has published an annual list of all visits overseas undertaken by Cabinet Ministers costing £500 or more during each financial year. The Government has also published on an annual basis the cost of all Ministers' visits overseas. Copies of the lists are available in the Libraries of the House.

The Department has published rules for official travel in its staff handbook and ministerial travel is governed by the Ministerial Code and Travel by Ministers, copies of which are available in the Libraries of the House.

(b) Travel costs for Special Advisors who accompany their Ministers overseas is included in the annual list on Overseas Travel by Cabinet Ministers. Further travel costs for *(b)* Special Advisers can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

(c) Total travel costs to the Department for *(c)* officials, which includes domestic and overseas travel and covers costs for the Court Service (CS), the Public Guardianship Office (PGO) and the Department for Constitutional Affairs, Headquarters (DCA HQ) are set out in the following table:

£

Period	*DCA HQ*	*CS*	*PGO*	*Total DCA*
2004–05 (to 30 November)	1,888,680	2,261,728	30,671	4,181,079
2003–04	2,389,149	3,664,272	34,639	6,088,060
2002–03	1,174,209	3,964,961	41,783	5,180,953
2001–02	1,179,355	3,377,593	61,480	4,618,428
2000–01	1,307,772	2,972,788	43,082	4,323,642
1999–2000	1,096,679	3,215,919	28,751	4,341,349
1998–99	903,983	2,696,618	16,934	3,617,535

All travel is undertaken in accordance with the guidelines set out in the "Ministerial Code" and the "Civil Service Management Code".

Witnesses (Criminal Courts)

Vera Baird: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what plans he has to extend the automatic availability of special witness measures to complainants in criminal cases of domestic violence. [203875]

Paul Goggins: I have been asked to reply.

The special measures provisions are contained in Part II Chapter I of the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999. They enable appropriate assistance to be provided across the range of vulnerable or intimidated witnesses.

Because of the special nature of sexual offences and the sensitive nature of the evidence that is given, victims of sexual offences are automatically eligible for special measures. This is also the case for young witnesses. Other witnesses will be eligible for assistance if the court considers that the quality of their evidence may be diminished on the grounds of a mental disorder, learning disability or physical disability or disorder, or because of their fear or distress about testifying. In the latter case the court must take into account a range of factors including the domestic circumstances of the witness, any behaviour towards the witness on the part of the accused, and the nature and alleged circumstances of the offence.

Domestic violence victims will be eligible for assistance if they meet these requirements. We would expect courts to be sensitive to the needs of victims of domestic violence and grant special measures where it would be appropriate.

The roll-out of special measures is ongoing and work is underway as part of the "No Witness No Justice" initiative. This will give a single point of contact to the witness and will provide a tailored needs assessment not only for their requirements at trial, but also for the period from charge to trial. The Government believes that it would be best to complete the implementation of these measures and then review their effectiveness before considering whether any changes to the legislation are needed.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

Parliamentary Pensions

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Leader of the House if the Parliamentary Pension scheme will participate in the Pension Protection Fund. [206870]

Mr. Hain: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Minister of State for Work and Pensions on 21 December 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1639–40W.

Statutory Instruments

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Leader of the House how many statutory instruments were introduced in the past 12 months; how many were debated on the Floor of the House; how many were made under the provisions of legislation originating in the European Communities; and if he will make a statement. [207096]

Mr. Hain: 1,032 made statutory instruments and 200 draft statutory instruments were laid before Parliament during 2004. 172 of the made instruments were made under powers contained in section 2 of the European Communities Act 1972. How many instruments were made under the provisions of other legislation which may have originated in the European Communities is not recorded.

Six affirmative instruments were debated on the Floor of the House during 2004. Two of these were not statutory instruments but were agreed by the House to be treated as such.

TREASURY

IT Projects

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list his Department's IT projects for each year since 1997, broken down by *(a)* amount spent, *(b)* purpose, *(c)* cost of over-run and *(d)* time of over-run. [205792]

Mr. Timms: The information in respect of the Treasury is in the following table.

The costs shown for each of the IT projects cover externally-provided hardware, software and implementation costs and may, in addition, cover other costs such as training where this will be part of the initial contract to be placed with the external contractor. The costs of in-house project development are not included. Support and on-going maintenance costs are excluded.

Only IT projects with estimated costs of over £250,000, on the basis described above, are included in the table.

The information is presented in a form which is consistent with previous replies.

Year of project start	*IT project*	*Actual or current estimate spend (£000)*	*Cost or time overrun (£000 months)*
1998	Replacement of Treasury Financial Information System (FIS)	559	—
1999	Replacement of central HR/personnel system for HMT	337	Time: 1
2000	Replacement of the computer system which supports the operational accounting and cashflow forecasting work of the Treasury Exchequer Funds and Accounts team. (TRiP)	1,000	Cost: 60 Time: 21
2000	Provision of a search engine to enhance the document management repository, internet and intranet in HMT	250	—
2000	Upgrading the Treasury PC desktop to Windows and Office 2000	2,500	—
2000	Replacement of Treasury's domestic accounting system	900	—
2001	Implementation of the GOLD system for the Consolidation of Central Government Accounts	622	—
2001	Redevelopment of Treasury's public website	250	—
2001	Provision of IT services in support of HMT Business Continuity Plan	1,455	—
2002	Move and provision of new IT facilities in new HMT building, 1 Horse Guards Road	1,717	—
2002	Conversion of HMT PCs from Token Ring networking to Ethernet networking	260	—
2002	Improvements to the capacity, reliability, performance and ease-of-use of secure remote working facilities in HMT	500	—
2003	Combining three separate Treasury financial data collection and reporting systems into one Single Data System	2,400	—
2003	Enhancing Document and Records Management capability in HM Treasury	1,800	—

DEFENCE

Anti-armour Weapons

Mr. Keith Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the features of the Brimstone anti-armour weapon, the New Light anti-armour weapon and the LF anti-tank guided weapon system distinguish them from each other. [206604]

Mr. Ingram: These three complementary anti-armour weapons have fundamentally different characteristics.

Brimstone is an air launched anti-armour missile system with a range of over 10,000 m. It will be carried by fast jet aircraft and operates autonomously after firing to search a given area for vehicles. In contrast, both the Next Generation Light And Armour Weapon

(NLAW) and Light Forces Anti-Tank Guided Weapon (LF ATGW) are man-portable ground based systems. NLAW is a short-range lightweight unguided weapon that will have broad applications across the services with a simple, but highly capable and versatile anti-armour capability. The LF ATGW, based on the US Javelin system, is a more sophisticated guided weapon with a range of some 2,500 m. Javelin will equip Light Forces, Mechanised and Armoured Infantry, and Formation Reconnaissance units.

European Combined Forces

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the relationship is between the new European peacekeeping force in Bosnia and the European Union; what command and control structures operate; what the relationship is between the new force and NATO; and if he will make a statement. [207711]

Mr. Hoon: The European Union peacekeeping force in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Operation ALTHEA, operates under the political control and strategic direction of the European Union. This is implemented through the Political and Security Committee and the EU Military Committee to the EU Operation Commander, General Sir John Reith, who also holds the NATO position of Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe.

The EU is able to draw on many NATO assets and capabilities in support of Operation ALTHEA in accordance with the Berlin Plus arrangements. There is a close working relationship between the EU and NATO in relation to operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, supported by the collocation of personnel at all levels of command. In Bosnia, there is a very close working relationship between the Commander of the EU Force and the Senior Military Representative in NATO HQ Sarajevo.

Procurement Budget

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the effects on the procurement budget of the spreading of the overheads of the defence exports industry across exports and UK requirements; and if he will make a statement. [207194]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence estimates that some £300 million annually is saved to its procurement budget through the spreading of its suppliers' overheads across export output in addition to UK requirements.

TRANSPORT

A3 (Road Safety)

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the accident statistics were for the A3 *(a)* in each of the five years before and *(b)* in each year after the 50 mph speed limit was introduced. [206903]

Mr. Jamieson: There is more than one 50 mph section on the A3 between Portsmouth and London.

The section of the A3 inside London forms part of the Greater London Authority Road Network—now known as the Transport for London Road Network—and is the responsibility of the Mayor and Transport for London (TfL). Further information concerning the accident statistics of that part of the A3 should be obtained from:

Chris Lines
Head of London Road Safety Unit
Transport for London
Windsor House
42–50 Victoria Street
London SW1H 0TL

The accident statistics for the A3 from Central London to Portsmouth in each of the last five years were as follows:

Number of accidents on the A3: GB 1999–2003

Severity	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
Fatal	5	11	9	7	14
Serious	99	119	112	95	103
Slight	815	725	770	773	653
All	919	855	891	875	770

Number of casualties on the A3: GB 1999–2003

Severity	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
Killed	5	12	9	7	17
Serious	116	131	129	106	120
Slight	1,070	977	1,000	1,016	906
All	1,191	1,120	1,138	1,129	1,043

Buses

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the impact of the privatised bus network in rural areas on access to public services; and if he will make a statement. [206901]

Charlotte Atkins: It is primarily for local authorities to assess whether the bus network is meeting the access needs of local communities and to decide in particular cases whether to subsidise a bus service under their duty in the Transport Act 1985 to secure a service where a public transport requirement would in their view not otherwise be met.

The Department has recently issued guidance to local authorities on accessibility planning, which sets a framework for local authorities to carry out an assessment of accessibility needs in their area and the setting of access priorities and targets.

Since 1998 Government have provided significant new funding for rural transport, including Rural Bus Subsidy Grant for local authorities which totals £51 million this year and is supporting 2,200 new and enhanced rural bus services. A large number of local authorities in rural areas are now helping to meet accessibility needs by supporting demand-responsive and community transport services.

Integrated National Public Transport Information System

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what progress has been made with the introduction of the comprehensive integrated national public transport information system, referred to on 20 July, *Official Report*, column 784. [204628]

Mr. Darling: Column reference 784, from the *Official Report* of 20 July does not exist. If the hon. Member cares to re-table his question with the correct *Official Report* reference, I will answer it.

Reading Station

Jane Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects the Strategic Rail Authority to provide him with the business case for a major scheme at Reading station; and when he expects to publish the business case. [207751]

Mr. McNulty: The Strategic Rail Authority has considered possible upgrade options for Reading station, but is not in a position to undertake further development of this scheme within its currently funded investment programme.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Age Discrimination

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what her Department's policy is towards age discrimination. [202381]

Jacqui Smith: As an equal opportunities employer, my Department regularly monitors its personnel procedures to ensure that there is no discrimination. The Department aims to be fair to all staff, and potential staff, and ensure that no-one receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of age.

We have equality proofed recruitment and internal postings policies and procedures and all staff below the senior civil service now have the same retirement age.

We are working with the Employers Forum on Age to further develop initiatives and to share best practice with a range of public and private sector employers. We also held a number of focus groups in 2004 to discuss age issues with staff as part of a CIPD study and are currently considering the outputs.

Average Earnings (Greater London)

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the average earnings for *(a)* males and *(b)* females working within the Greater London area was in the latest period for which figures are available. [201651]

Mr. Timms: I have been asked to reply.

The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Tom Cox, dated 12 January 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question concerning what the average earnings for *(a)* males and *(b)* females working within the Greater London area was in the latest period for which figures are available. (201651).

Average earnings are estimated from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings and are provided for employees on adult rates of pay whose pay was unaffected by absence during the pay period, by their place of work. This is the standard definition used for Annual Survey of Hours and Earning tables. The Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings does not collect data on the self employed and people who do unpaid work.

The median gross weekly earnings in 2004, for full-time males in Greater London was £597.0 and for females £478.3.

These data, along with mean gross weekly earnings and details for local authorities, are available on the statistics web site:

http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_labour/ASHE_2004_mc/tab7_la.xls

The Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, carried out in April of each year, is the most comprehensive source of earnings information in the United Kingdom. It has a one per cent sample of all employees.

The Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings publication criteria ensures that published estimates are undisclosive. A number of estimates have been removed from the published tables for these reasons.

Departmental Funding (Hertfordshire)

Claire Ward: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will list the organisations and businesses in Hertfordshire that have received funding from *(a)* the Department and *(b)* its arm's length bodies in (i) 2002–03 and (ii) 2003–04. [207574]

Jacqui Smith: Most departmental funding for Hertfordshire is made available through arm's length bodies. The following table shows a list of Hertfordshire based businesses and organisations in receipt of DTI funding through the East of England Development Agency (EEDA) and the Small Business Service (SBS). The list includes Business Link for Hertfordshire whose primary funding is channelled through the regional SBS team based in Cambridge.

Because the Department's Finance and Resource Management Directorate does not hold information at county level it would not be possible, without disproportionate expense, to provide a comprehensive list of businesses and organisations in Hertfordshire that have received funding from centrally delivered initiatives.

Hertfordshire companies and organisations receiving funding through DTI agencies in financial years ending 31 March 2003 and 2004

Organisation name	*Funding agency*	*Funded in*	
		2002–03	*2003–04*
3D Experience Ltd	SBS	Yes	Yes
A and O Consultancy Ltd.	SBS	Yes	Yes
Advanced Visual Technology Ltd.	SBS	Yes	Yes
Apsley Paper Trail	EEDA	Yes	Yes
Ashe Morris Ltd.	SBS	Yes	—
Borehamwood Community Partnership	EEDA	Yes	Yes
Broadband for All—Little Gaddesden	EEDA	—	Yes
Business Link Hertfordshire	EEDA	Yes	—
Business Link Hertfordshire	SBS	Yes	Yes
Camtel	SBS	Yes	Yes
ChemAdd Ltd.	SBS	—	Yes
Chiltern Microwave Ltd.	SBS	Yes	Yes
Cytofluidix Ltd.	SBS	Yes	—
DXG (UK) Ltd.	SBS	—	Yes
EEC (Europe) Ltd.	SBS	—	Yes
Enterprising Communities	EEDA	—	Yes
ETAG Solutions Ltd.	SBS	—	Yes
European Technology for Business Ltd.	SBS	Yes	Yes
Fairclough Hall Farm	EEDA	Yes	—
Food Business Development Consultancy	SBS	—	Yes
Hatfield Heath Broadband	EEDA	—	Yes
Hatfield Regis Grange Farm	EEDA	Yes	Yes
Hertfordshire Business Incubation Centre Ltd.	EEDA	Yes	Yes
Hertfordshire Chamber of Commerce and Industry	EEDA	Yes	Yes
Hertfordshire County Council	EEDA	—	Yes
Hertfordshire Enterprise Alliance	EEDA	Yes	—
Hertfordshire Prosperity Forum	EEDA	—	Yes
Hexton Manor Farm	EEDA	Yes	Yes
Innovation Society for the East of England	EEDA	Yes	Yes
Intelligent Personal Security Ltd.	SBS	—	Yes
KeCrypt Ltd.	SBS	—	Yes
Lamerholm Fleming Ltd.	SBS	Yes	—
Lee Valley Regional Park Authority	EEDA	Yes	—
MGM Mills-Rose Farm	EEDA	Yes	—
Naviguide Search Technology Ltd.	SBS	Yes	Yes
New Media Services	SBS	—	Yes
Omnagen Ltd.	SBS	—	Yes
Optical Metrology Centre	SBS	Yes	Yes
PE Mead and Sons	EEDA	—	Yes
Photonics Consultancy	SBS	Yes	Yes
Quadro Healthcare Ltd.	SBS	—	Yes
Raitzen Technologies Ltd.	SBS	Yes	Yes
Realife Trust	EEDA	Yes	—
Rothamsted Research	EEDA	Yes	—
SB Electronic Systems Ltd.	SBS	Yes	—
Screen East (Leavesden)	EEDA	—	Yes
Software for People Ltd.	SBS	Yes	Yes
South West Herts Business Partnership Limited	EEDA	—	Yes
Stevenage Partnership Group	EEDA	Yes	Yes
Syrris Ltd.	SBS	Yes	Yes
The Waltham Cross SRB6 Partnership	EEDA	Yes	—
The Zap Corporation Ltd.	SBS	—	Yes
Trestle Theatre Company	EEDA	Yes	—
University of Hertfordshire	EEDA	Yes	Yes
University of Hertfordshire Business School	EEDA	Yes	Yes
Ware Museum Trust	EEDA	Yes	Yes
Watford Borough Council	EEDA	—	Yes
Welwyn Hatfield Area Regeneration Partnership	EEDA	Yes	Yes
West Watford and South Oxhey Area Partnership Board	EEDA	Yes	Yes
Xennia Technology Ltd.	SBS	—	Yes

Export Credits Guarantee Department

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether the Export Credits Guarantee Department has suspended further cover to BAE Systems pending the outcome of the investigation by the Serious Fraud Office into allegations of false accounting. [206156]

Mr. Alexander *[holding answer 21 December 2004]:* ECGD has not suspended further cover to BAE Systems.

On any application for further cover from BAE Systems ECGD will consider, in accordance with its standard practice, both facts relating to the transaction for which cover is sought and any relevant history of the applicant in other transactions. Conviction for corrupt activity in other transactions would be a prima facie reason not to grant further cover.

Lie Detector Technology

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment her Department has made of the value of using lie detector technology when assessing claims for coal disease-related compensation. [207722]

Nigel Griffiths: Voice stress technology is increasingly being used by the insurance industry to speed up claims processing. The Department considered whether to do a limited trial to assess its usefulness in Vibration White Finger claims but decided against it.

Lyons Review

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what response the Department has made to proposals in the Lyons Review to relocate jobs in the Department to North East Scotland. [207634]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 10 January 2005]:* My Department is required under the Spending Review 2004 to report its relocation proposals to the Office of Government Commerce by March 2005 and is currently developing its proposals. The Lyons Review acknowledged that the Department has an office in Aberdeen, serving the oil and gas industry, and there is no intention to change this position.

Reach Initiative

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on the Reach Initiative regarding unsafe substances; what progress has been made with international consideration of the initiative; what barriers there are to its agreement; and if she will make a statement. [207198]

Jacqui Smith: The aim of the proposed REACH Regulation (Registration, Evaluation and Authorisation of Chemicals) is to ensure a high level of protection of human health and the environment from hazardous substances across the EU, while also ensuring the efficient functioning of the internal market, and stimulating innovation and competitiveness in the industries affected by it. These aims will be achieved by improving the information available to users of substances, including consumers, and public authorities on the potential risks posed by substances.

On 21 January 2004 the EU notified the proposed Regulation under the WTO Technical Barriers to Trade Agreement, providing our trading partners with an opportunity to comment on the proposals. In response to the several comments received, the European Commission gave a detailed presentation to WTO members on the proposed operation and rationale of the REACH Regulation at the TBT Committee held on 4 November 2004 and explained that they considered REACH to be proportionate and did not discriminate against non-EU suppliers.

The continuing negotiations on REACH will seek to remove barriers to agreement among member states by improving the proposals further. The Government are seeking to reach political agreement under the UK Presidency of the EU during the second half of this year.

UK Trade and Investment

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what UK Trade and Investment business support schemes are run by representative trade bodies; and what plans there are to end these schemes. [203953]

Mr. Alexander: UK Trade and Investment administers a number of schemes run by representative trade bodies. These schemes include Support for Exhibitions and Seminars Abroad (SESA), the Export Marketing Research Scheme (EMRS) and the Export Communication Review Scheme (ECRS).

However, as part of its Trade Services Review, which followed an extensive Customer Needs Review, UK Trade and Investment will continue to monitor and evaluate its offering of business support schemes to ensure that its resources are used to maximum impact and benefit to its customers.

Written Answers to Questions

Thursday 13 January 2005

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much the Department spent on lawyers in each year since 1997; how many *(a)* actions, *(b)* settlements and *(c)* court cases there were in each year and what the costs of each settlement were. [206457]

Derek Twigg: The Department incurred the following costs in each financial year since 1997.

Financial year	*Total cost (£)*	*Number of files worked on by TSD*
1997–98	498,845.38	121
1998–99	344,390.88	137
1999–2000	387,257.75	145
2000–01	483,178.68	135
2001–02	459,860.26	177
2002–03	476,280.71	188
2003–04	705,108.26	192
2004–05[1]	687,098.83	132

[1] To December 2004.

The column headed "Total cost" shows the total annual cost to the Department of services relating to litigation in courts and tribunals (including services which did not result in the issue of proceedings).

The Treasury Solicitor's Department's charges for services relating to litigation (which form by far the greatest part of the annual total) include the cost of *(a)* lawyers (including solicitors and counsel) and other staff, *(b)* services and disbursements not attributable to the cost of lawyers (such as court fees) and *(c)* for the years up to 2001–02, costs and damages paid to other parties in litigation by the Department.

The column headed "No. of files worked on by TSD" shows the number of "files" worked on by the Treasury Solicitor's Department in each year. On receipt of instructions from the Department, a "file" is opened by the Treasury Solicitor's Department to provide a reference for billing purposes. Such a "file" will usually correspond with a court case (or action), but this is not always so. For example, a number of cases may be dealt with under one "file" reference; or there may be a "file" for a claim which is resolved before the issue of court proceedings. Many of the "files" will have been worked on in more than one year. If so, the "file" is included in each of the relevant years.

A breakdown of this information to give details of the number of cases, how many of these were settled or proceeded to a full hearing, and the legal costs of each case on an annual basis could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

The Department's own lawyers do not conduct any litigation on behalf of the Department. The costs to the Department of their services have been disregarded in this answer.

Departmental Files

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether it is the policy of the Department to retain for the benefit of future *(a)* historians and *(b)* applicants under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 the same (i) complete categories of files, (ii) numbers of files and (iii) representative examples of files from categories of files destroyed as had been preserved prior to the passage of that Act. [203328]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: In accordance with the Public Records Act 1958 S.3, the selection of records of enduring historical value for permanent preservation at The National Archives (TNA) will continue to take place in Department for Education and Skills under the guidance and supervision of TNA staff. The Department will also comply with the Code of Practice on Records Management, issued by the Lord Chancellor under S.46 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, which underlines the importance of having clear selection policies and disposal schedules in place.

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how many departmental files have been destroyed in each of the past five years; [203329]

(2) when she will reply to the question tabled on 3 December 2004, by the hon. Member for New Forest East, ref 203329. [208327]

Derek Twigg: In accordance with its selection policies and disposal schedules, the Department for Education and Skills has destroyed the following number of files in each of the last five years.

	Number of registered files
2000	4,146
2001	18,044
2002	22,605
2003	9,419
2004	5,335

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what changes have been promulgated in each of the past five years to the guidelines or other criteria for the retention or destruction of departmental files. [203330]

Derek Twigg: Since 1999, the Department has periodically reviewed and produced schedules, for the disposal of records which are specific to its administrative activities, for both existing and new work. It also disposes of its records in accordance with over twenty guidance notes produced by The National Archives (TNA) over the last five years, covering disposal schedules, managing records in the electronic environment, as well as overarching records management guidance. Further details of this guidance can be found on TNA's website at:

http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/recordsmanagement/advice

Further and Higher Education

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many claims of disability discrimination in higher education and further education have been made in England in each year since 2002 *(a)* in total and *(b)* broken down by county court; and if she will make a statement. [208111]

Derek Twigg: My Department remains fully committed to the work we are all taking forward across Government to improve the rights of disabled people. Clearly education plays an important part in removing the barriers to participation in society and we will continue to ensure that it does so. Compliance with the DDA is made clear to all our delivery partners.

We do not collect this information centrally and it is not a contractual obligation which we place on our delivery partners. To collect such information would require putting in place systems whereby each FE/HE institution would need to complete regular returns, which would add both bureaucratic and financial burdens. To conduct a one-off exercise to respond to your question would incur disproportionate costs as we would need to approach all FE/HE institutions directly for the information.

We have, however, asked the DRC for information on the number of cases they have been involved with and they have informed us that since 2002 they have funded five post-16 cases which have been issued in the county court. Four were resolved before hearing and one is ongoing.

Homophobia

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps she is taking to provide professional training for teachers on how to tackle homophobic bullying. [208313]

Derek Twigg: May I refer the hon. Gentleman to my previous answers of 11 January 2005 and 20 December 2004, with particular reference to the following measures we are taking: guidance for schools entitled "Stand Up for Us: Challenging Homophobia in Schools" and the publication of the research report "Homophobia, Sexual Orientation and Schools: a review and implications for action". "Stand Up for Us" was produced by National Health Schools Standard colleagues with support form both the Department for Education and Skills and the Department of Health and is specifically designed to inform teachers on how to deal with issues surrounding homophobic bullying. The research report, which was produced by the Thomas Coram Unit, will be used to inform future developments in our work with schools. The Key Stage 3 behaviour and attendance strategy includes a training module on preventing bullying—including homophobic bullying—and schools can access additional support from their local Behaviour and Attendance Consultant.

Might I also highlight the first Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) History Month in February 2005. A website has been developed to support this which will suggest activities and events for schools and colleges and offers teachers specific lesson plans and assembly suggestions to encourage and support schools in marking LGBT History Month. It will also provide an online notice board of events and link to current news relevant LGBT History Month. See more at http://www.lgbthistorymonth.org.uk

The activities above all support teaching staff in countering homophobic bullying. We aim to provide them with the tools they need to convey the message to their pupils that homophobic bullying, like any other form of bullying, cannot be tolerated and that we must challenge homophobic language and attitudes wherever we find them.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Building Regulations

Mr. Syms: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the potential effects of the new Part P of Building Regulations on the number of deaths caused by substandard electrical work; and if he will make a statement. [202119]

Phil Hope: The Part P Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) published on 22 July 2004 indicates that the annual average number of electrical fatalities in dwellings between 1990 and 1999 was 43. The number of fatalities that will be avoided each year by introducing Part P of the Building Regulations is estimated to be eight. The RIA also indicates that over the same period there were around 2900 injuries each year requiring hospital treatment, and that the number that will be avoided is 548.

Community Housing Task Force

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the previous experience of each member of the community housing task force, with particular reference to experience in *(a)* the private sector and *(b)* council house administration. [207020]

Keith Hill: A copy of the information requested has been made available in the Library of the House.

Document Costs

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many copies of the document Creating Better Places and Lives have been printed by his Department; what the costs of *(a)* design, *(b)* printing and *(c)* distribution were; and how many copies were posted unsolicited to individuals and organisations. [208231]

Yvette Cooper: The publication to which I think the hon. Member is referring is "Creating better places to live—a guide to the planning system in England".

The cost of the design (design, artwork and photography) for this publication was £20,135.17, and the cost of printing was £18,000 for 100,000 copies.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister distributed 7,260 copies of the guide by post to interested parties at a cost of £1,170. A further 500 copies were sent to each of the nine Government Offices for the Regions.

Freedom of Information

Matthew Taylor: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many staff in his Department were employed to deal with Freedom of Information Act 2000 issues in *(a)* 2001, *(b)* 2002, *(c)* 2003 and *(d)* 2004; and how many staff are budgeted to deal with Freedom of Information Act 2000 issues in (i) 2005 and (ii) 2006. [205046]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was created in 2002 and provided a common Freedom of Information (FOI) service to both the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Department for Transport until 2003. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has employed the following numbers of full-time equivalent staff to deal with Freedom of Information Act and Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) issues: three in 2002, five in 2003, and seven in 2004. This includes two staff involved in project management and support for the FOI Implementation project in 2003 and 2004. In 2005 and 2006, 5.5 full-time equivalent staff are budgeted to deal with FOI and EIR issues.

Beyond those staff directly involved in the ongoing implementation and application of FOI within a Department, it is difficult to identify precisely the number of officials who will be dealing with Freedom of Information issues from 1 January 2005, since it is potentially part of every civil servant's role to respond to Freedom of Information requests.

Land Classifications

Norman Baker: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many hectares were classified as *(a)* urban and *(b)* suburban in each year since 1990, broken down by region. [208222]

Keith Hill: Available data from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's definition of 1991 and 2001 Urban Settlements provide a comparable classification of urban land use with an associated population of 1,000 or more. There are no estimates available for suburban land.

The following table shows urban land use in hectares broken down by region in England.

Region	*Area of urban land (hectares) 1991*	*2001*
North East	57,200	60,200
North West	153,100	160,300
Yorkshire and the Humber	114,100	121,000
East Midlands	92,300	100,900
West Midlands	122,700	129,200
East of England	124,200	134,900
London	130,600	130,500
South East	190,100	205,100
South West	103,000	116,700

Source:
1991 and 2001 the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister Urban Settlements definition

Living Spaces Programme

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the grants made through the Living Spaces programme broken down by local authority area; and what *(a)* the value of the grant, *(b)* the title of the scheme and *(c)* the objective of each scheme was in each case. [208232]

Phil Hope: 703 grants have been made through the Living Spaces programme since it was launched in May 2003. The information requested for each project is set out in the table which has been placed in the Library. This information will be made available in due course on the Living Spaces website: www.living-spaces.org.uk

Telecommunications Masts

Chris Ruane: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what measures have been taken to encourage dual or multiple use of mobile telephone masts. [207993]

Yvette Cooper: Planning Policy Guidance Note 8, "Telecommunications" (PPG8), makes clear the expectation that developers should provide evidence to local planning authorities that they have carefully considered the use of existing masts, buildings and other structures before seeking to erect any new mast, regardless of size. The authority may be justified in refusing prior approval or planning permissions if it considers the evidence regarding the consideration of such alternative sites is not satisfactory.

Ministers in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister meet regularly with the Mobile Operators Association to discuss a range of issues including the operators' progress in meeting their ten commitments which includes a commitment on site sharing. The UK network operators have established a cross-industry Site Share Working Group and have developed a database to facilitate the exchange of information on site sharing opportunities. The Association also sends statistics relating to site sharing to the Planning Minister every quarter.

Motorway Services

Mrs. May: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) when his Department received the Inspector's Report on the proposed motorway services areas at Great Hazes, Great Wood and Junction 8/9 on the M4; [208263]

(2) when he expects to give his decision on the proposed motorway service areas at Junction 8/9, Great Wood and Great Hazes on the M4, references APP/CO305/A/96/266283, APP/TO355/V/01/1073114 and APP/TO305/A/011070069. [208264]

Keith Hill: The Inspector's report into six proposals for motorway service areas at Great Hazes, Great Wood and Junction 8/9 on the M4, New Barn Farm on the M25, and Mount Hill Farm and Burtley Wood on the M40 was received by the Office on 12 January 2005.

Consideration will now be given to the Inspector's report, and his recommendations, and decisions will be issued as soon as that consideration is completed. However, given the very recent receipt of the report in the Office, it is not possible at this stage to give an indication of when those decisions will be made. I am happy to write to the hon. Member when we have a clearer indication of a timeframe for decision.

Neighbourhood Renewal Funding

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the balance in the use of neighbourhood renewal funds in Islington is between the most deprived and the least deprived wards in the borough; whether it is his policy that such funds should be primarily targeted at areas of deprivation; and what discussions he plans to have with the borough council about this issue. [208242]

Yvette Cooper: Neighbourhood Renewal Funding (NRF) was announced in 2000 to provide £900 million over three years to 88 of the most deprived areas of the country as measured by the Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2000. Decisions about where and how the money is spent are taken locally based on Local Strategic Partnerships' knowledge and understanding of local need.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not collect information on the allocation of Neighbourhood Renewal Funding (NRF) to specific wards, and could only provide it at disproportionate cost.

Planning Policy Statement 6

Brian Cotter: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the meetings that have taken place between *(a)* Ministers and *(b)* officials of his Department and representatives of (i) Tesco, (ii) Asda, (iii) Sainsburys and (iv) Morrisons about Planning Policy Statement 6 (Town Centres) over the last 12 months. [207037]

Keith Hill: I and officials of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister met the British Retail Consortium in May 2004. Among those present were representatives of Tesco and Asda. This meeting discussed a range of issues including draft Planning Policy Statement 6 (PPS6). In addition officials have met representatives of three of the companies to discuss PPS6, on the following dates: Asda—April 2004 and July 2004, Sainsburys—May 2004, Tesco—September 2004.

Officials of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister made a series of presentations to a range of stakeholder groups during the consultation period on PPS6. Representatives of Tesco, Asda and Sainsburys did attend a number of these group events. In addition, during the course of Government business Ministers and their officials regularly attend conferences, seminars and events on retail planning matters at which representatives of these companies are present and general matters of policy are discussed.

Staff Gyms

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many gyms are available to staff in the Department; and what the cost of providing them was in the last year for which figures are available. [204374]

Phil Hope: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has four gym facilities available for use by its staff within buildings managed by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, and access to six others in buildings managed by others.

The net annual running cost of these in 2003–04 was £142,000. Of this £123,000 (87 per cent.) was for the operation of a fitness centre for firefighters and other trainees at the Fire Service College (FSC) that is also open to members of the public and FSC staff via a membership scheme. The balance was for fitness facilities in the Government Office for the South East and The Planning Inspectorate, which is an Agency of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

A one-off cost of £86,000 was incurred for moving the fitness centre in the Government Office for the South East, as part of a building refurbishment scheme. All figures exclude VAT.

Although the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has overall responsibility for the buildings occupied by Government Offices, they carry out functions on behalf of 10 Government Departments.

Sustainable Communities

Norman Baker: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make it a requirement for all new dwellings in his proposed sustainable communities to *(a)* be fitted with photovoltaic cells and *(b)* have separation of drinking water from grey water. [208351]

Phil Hope: Minimum performance requirements for dwellings are conveyed through the Building Regulations. These are functional rather than prescriptive to enable compliance in practical and cost-effective ways, and to leave open the possibilities for innovation. It would therefore be inappropriate to prescribe particular technologies such as grey water and photovoltaic cells.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is reviewing the Building Regulations energy efficiency requirements, and amendment proposals were published for consultation in July 2004. The proposals include setting minimum performance standards at levels much higher than at present and providing new technical guidance on low and zero carbon systems. The aim is to encourage builders to take more account of the benefits of low and zero carbon systems without being prescriptive. The responses to the consultation will be taken into account in developing the final amendment provisions which we aim to publish this summer.

Water conservation is being considered under a review of Part G of the Building Regulations which currently deals with hygiene matters. As in the case of energy, water conservation requirements are likely to be in functional terms. However, the supporting guidance is likely to include a suggestion that a separate water supply should be made to toilets. This will enable toilets to be supplied with grey water rather than use drinking water.

Norman Baker: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what recent assessment he has made of the effects on flood risk elsewhere of the construction of sustainable communities east of London. [208354]

Keith Hill: Designing communities that minimise as far as possible the probability and consequences of flooding is an important part of building sustainable communities in the Thames Gateway.

Planning Policy Guidance Note 25 (PPG25) applies in the Thames Gateway as elsewhere. It looks to regional and local planning authorities to ensure that flood risk is properly taken into account in regional spatial strategies, local development frameworks and plans for individual developments to reduce the risk of flooding and the damage which floods cause.

The Thames Gateway London Partnership is currently undertaking a strategic flood risk assessment that will help the 11 boroughs in the east London part of the Thames Gateway take account of flood risk as part of their planning processes.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy

Mr. Francois: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the likely *(a)* set up costs and *(b)* annual administration costs of the proposed accreditation scheme under the Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy. [206553]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 21 December 2004]:* There are several examples of effective accreditation schemes already in existence. It may well be that we will be able to use an existing scheme rather than set up a new one. Issues around the costs of such as scheme will be discussed with the industry.

Mr. Francois: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many members the Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy Industry Stakeholder Group is likely to comprise; and when he envisages that it will hold its first meeting. [206554]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 21 December 2004]:* We aim to establish stakeholder groups with particular areas of focus early in the new year, and will want to make sure that all sectors of the alcohol industry are represented.

Crime Statistics (Bedford and Kempston)

Mr. Patrick Hall: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many incidents of *(a)* domestic burglary, *(b)* criminal damage, *(c)* drug offences, *(d)* robbery, *(e)* vehicle theft and *(f)* violence against the person were recorded in Bedford and Kempston in (i) 1997 and (ii) 2003. [207225]

Ms Blears: The information requested is not available centrally.

Bedford is a Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) area. Data at CDRP level has only been published from 1999/2000 onwards. The latest figures for six key offences for 2003/04 can be found at:

http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs04/cdrptabs.pdf

More detailed statistics at CDRP level are available for 2002–03 on the new Home Office website:

http://www.crimestatistics.org.uk

Custody Sergeants

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on plans to civilianise the post of custody sergeant; and what consultation his Department has conducted with interested parties. [206684]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 21 December 2004]:* Clauses 111 and 112 of the Serious Organised Crime and Police Bill, currently before Parliament, proposes that chief officers of police may appoint a staff custody officer in the role of custody officer as set out in Part IV of the Police and Criminal evidence Act 1984.

The proposal to appoint staff custody officers was contained in the public consultation document "Policing: Modernising Police Powers to Meet Community Needs" published on 12 August 2004. Some 141 responses were received to the exercise, with a number of respondents commenting on the specific area of designated police staff carrying out the function of custody officer. There was strong support for the measure as well as concern about the ability of non-police officers being used in this post.

We intend to build on the successes already identified in the use of police staff through the workforce modernisation programme. Meetings have taken place with stakeholders at both ministerial and official level. Further meetings are planned early in the new year to discuss this and other areas of police powers contained in the Bill. We will use these meetings to consider how best to introduce the role of staff custody officer.

Initiatives (Funding)

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what budget has been allocated to the National Asylum Support Forum in each of the last two years; and how many staff have been employed by the Forum in each year. [201898]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Forum is a regular meeting at which representatives from key stakeholder groups discuss current and future issues in Asylum Support. The Immigration and Nationality Directorate's costs of contributing to this are met from within their overall budget. It is not, therefore, possible to give information on staffing. No specific budget is allocated to it.

Policing (Young People)

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what remedy is available for a young person whose parents are mistakenly informed by the police that he has been spoken to about his conduct, on the basis that his name and address have been given by another individual to the police; [204810]

(2) what standard of proof is required, and upon whom, when there is a question about whether a young person whose parents have been informed in writing that he has been spoken to by the police about his conduct, asserts that he was not the individual spoken to; [204811]

(3) what opportunity is given to a young person to show that he is not the person who was spoken to about his conduct by the police before it is recorded that his parents have been notified that he has been spoken to about his conduct; [204812]

(4) what police record is kept when a young person has been spoken to by police about his conduct and a letter is sent to his parents; [204858]

(5) what steps are taken against a young person whose parents have been notified on one occasion that he has been spoken to by police, if he is spoken to by police again; [204859]

(6) what action police officers should take to verify the name and address of a young person before they write to his parents to say that he has been spoken to about his conduct; [204860]

(7) what the status is of records kept by police that a young person has been spoken to by police and a letter sent to his parents where no verification of the individual's name and address have taken place; [204861]

(8) if he will recommend to police forces that, when asking for a young person's name and address in advance of sending a letter about his conduct to his parents, the individual's date of birth is also noted; [204862]

(9) if he will introduce a policy that a young person who is spoken to by police about his conduct is taken home to his parents before details are recorded. [204863]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 14 December 2004]*: The processes used by police forces to check the identity of a young person vary from case to case but will include asking to see any identification they may have on them, taking them home, cross-checking with any peers present at the time or asking their parents to attend the police station after arrest. The individual may also be known to the officer dealing with them. Relatively few young people give false details to the police; where there is doubt the police will make every effort to establish the correct details.

The processes used by police forces to record details of contacts with young people vary from force to force and will also depend upon the circumstances of the incident itself. Not every contact is recorded as that may be inappropriate.

In the case of street bail, the police will write to the parents of the young person concerned asking them to attend with their child at an appropriate time. Again, if it becomes clear that the young person is not the one involved in the matter under investigation, police will make every effort to locate the correct person.

Where the police decide to administer a reprimand or final warning, both of which count as a youth justice disposal, they are required first to make certain that the young person did commit the offence; including their having admitted this to the officer. The police then write to the young person, and their parents if the young person is under 16, asking them to attend at a police station for the reprimand or warning. If for any reason the wrong person has been written to the process will be discontinued with no action recorded against them, and separate attempts made to establish the true identity of the offender.

There are no current plans to change the way in which individual forces interact with young people as their policies will reflect local community concerns and protocols. However Clause 107 of the Serious Organised Crime and Police Bill will allow the photographing of suspects elsewhere than at a police station. This will provide a safeguard against misidentification.

Road Traffic Offences (Fatalities)

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make it a requirement for sentencing in all road traffic cases where a fatality has occurred to be made at the Crown court. [201253]

Paul Goggins: All current offences that include a fatality as an element are indictable only and dealt with in the Crown court. The current review of road traffic offences addresses the adequacy of the current law in respect of the often tragic consequences of bad driving, including the appropriate venue for trial. This work is reaching a conclusion and we aim to publish the consultation paper shortly. We are also responding to the recommendation of the Transport Committee's report "Traffic Law and Its Enforcement" that more cases should be dealt with in the Crown court. The Government are currently preparing its response to the Select Committee and aims to present this in the near future.

Sentencing

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will reassess the need for short custodial sentences, including custody plus, where there is no evidence of a deterrent effect or rehabilitative value. [204476]

Paul Goggins: The Criminal Justice Act 2003 introduced Custody Plus, which reforms the structure of short prison sentences. Custody Plus will involve a short custodial sentence followed by supervision and rehabilitation in the community.

At present most offenders released into the community after short sentences receive no supervision or support. Under Custody Plus, time spent in custody will be one part of an overall sentence plan, managed by a single offender manager, who will be responsible for ensuring appropriate interventions in order to prevent reoffending.

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

Freedom of Information

John Mann: To ask the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire, representing the House of Commons Commission, what categories of information are available under Freedom of Information legislation that have not been provided in written parliamentary answers on behalf of the House of Commons Commission in the last three years. [207832]

Sir Archy Kirkwood: The Freedom of Information Act does not make specific categories of information available, but places a general duty on public authorities to provide information, subject to specified exemptions. The House of Commons is a public authority within the terms of the Act, and written requests for information will be handled in accordance with the terms of the Act. The Act does not apply to parliamentary questions and answers, and I therefore do not expect any significant change in the Commission's practice in answering oral or written parliamentary questions as a result of the coming into force of the Act.

PRIME MINISTER

European Constitution

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Prime Minister which speakers will be invited to the planned meeting of FTSE 100 leaders at Downing street on the European Constitution; what the projected cost of this meeting is; and which *(a)* Ministers and *(b)* outside organisations will be in attendance. [207109]

The Prime Minister: No such meeting is currently planned.

Iraq

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Prime Minister (1) what discussions he has had with the US Administration concerning the tactics used in the siege of Fallujah; and if he will make a statement; [207797]

(2) what discussions he has had with the US *(a)* President and *(b)* Defence Secretary on the creation of a free fire zone in Fallujah. [207798]

The Prime Minister: The Government and UK Military Commanders are engaged in constant dialogue with the US Government on a range of operations in Iraq. Disclosing details would endanger those operations.

Non-proliferation Treaty

Mr. Flook: To ask the Prime Minister whether a senior Cabinet Minister will attend the non-proliferation treaty meeting to be held in London in spring 2005. [208229]

The Prime Minister: There is no non-proliferation treaty meeting in London this spring. However there will be an International Conference on Nuclear Security, which will be held in London between 16 and 18 March.

The Foreign Secretary, who would normally have attended this conference, is unable to do so because of previous engagements. In his absence his Minister of State, Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean, will represent him.

TREASURY

Credit Unions

Chris Ruane: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) whether he plans to offer alternative funding assistance to credit unions to replace funding withdrawn due to state aid regulations; [207975]

(2) what recent representations he has received on state aid regulations in relation to credit unions; [207976]

(3) what assessment he has made of the impact of new state aid regulations on *(a)* newly-formed and *(b)* established credit unions. [207994]

Mr. Timms: In late 2003, the Government became aware that the European Commission took the view that Government funding of credit unions potentially constituted state aid. The Government have kept in close contact with the credit union sector on this issue and is currently working to gain approval of a scheme whereby funding of credit unions is permissible under state aid rules.

Free Trade Area

Mr. Brady: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will assess the economic benefits that would arise from the creation of a free trade area including the US and the EU. [208078]

Mr. Timms: The benefits from trade liberalisation are greatest if barriers are reduced on a multilateral basis.

Complementary to pursuing a successful outcome to the Doha Development Round of WTO negotiations, the Government supports strengthened economic cooperation between the EU and the US, focusing particularly on non-tariff barriers such as regulations and standards.

The OECD is currently analysing the economic benefits of closer transatlantic economic integration with initial results due in the spring.

Mr. Brady: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what discussions his Department has had with the EU Trade Commissioner regarding the creation of a free trade area between the EU and the US. [208317]

Mr. Timms: The Treasury and other Government Departments have regular contacts with the Commission on issues related to EU-US economic co-operation.

Income Statistics

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the level of average real personal disposable income was in each year since 1975; and what the percentage change was in each year. [207773]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Michael Meacher, dated January 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question on the level of average real personal disposable income per head (207773).

The information available is shown in the attached table. The data is presented as annual values for 1975 to 2003. Annual data for 2004 are not published until March.

The households series used for these data are for the combined household and non-profit institutions serving households (NPISH) sectors. The accounts for the household and NPISH sectors are currently combined: separate estimates are not available.

	Real households disposable income per head at chained volume measures Ref. Year 2001[1] *(£)*	*Percentage change, year on year (%)*
1975	6,011	1.0
1976	5,989	−0.4
1977	5,870	−2.0
1978	6,301	7.3
1979	6,666	5.8
1980	6,767	1.5
1981	6,730	−0.5
1982	6,714	−0.2
1983	6,849	2.0
1984	7,093	3.6
1985	7,316	3.1
1986	7,602	3.9
1987	7,865	3.5
1988	8,276	5.2
1989	8,640	4.4
1990	8,917	3.2
1991	9,066	1.7
1992	9,298	2.6
1993	9,536	2.6
1994	9,657	1.3
1995	9,859	2.1
1996	10,101	2.5
1997	10,491	3.9
1998	10,497	0.1
1999	10,804	2.9
2000	11,427	5.8
2001	11,882	4.0
2002	12,009	1.1
2003	12,272	2.2

[1] The real household disposable income per head series is currently measured in the prices of year 2001. The current prices series for household disposable income is re-valued by the households and NPISH final consumption deflator.

Ministerial Visits

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer which *(a)* military facilities and *(b)* defence contractors he has visited since he took office in 1997, excluding the Dockyards in Rosyth. [203936]

Mr. Gordon Brown: Since 1997 Treasury Ministers have had a number of meetings with defence contractors, visited a number of military facilities and have met the Chiefs of Staff on a number of occasions to discuss defence matters.

However to provide the full detailed information requested would incur disproportionate cost.

State Opening of Parliament

Lynne Jones: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will assess the benefits to the economy of the State Opening of Parliament. [208234]

Mr. Timms: The State Opening of Parliament is not motivated by economic considerations. Any economic effects arising from it are likely to be extremely small.

Tax Credits

Mr. Steen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when a decision will be made on the appeal submitted by Mr. Keith Morris of Paignton on 23 October 2004 against an alleged overpayment of tax credits. [207837]

Dawn Primarolo: The Inland Revenue replied to the hon. Gentleman about his constituent on 11 January 2005 having written to Mr. Morris on 6 January.

Uzbekistan

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what discussions he has had with the Government of Uzbekistan about the merits of implementing banking sector reforms that *(a)* increase independence of banks from the State, *(b)* ensure confidentiality of accounts and *(c)* remove restrictions on cash transactions; [208133]

(2) what discussions he has had with his counterpart in Uzbekistan about the merits of *(a)* removing restrictions on convertibility, *(b)* relaxing restrictions on circulation of the national currency, *(c)* allowing market mechanisms to determine the exchange rate and *(d)* permitting gradual devaluation of the Som. [208134]

Mr. Timms: None.

DEFENCE

African Union Troops

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what measures he has taken in respect of the UK commitment to train 20,000 African Union troops over the next five years. [207056]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence is organising this training in two different ways. First, by direct action, for example through British military training teams deployed to Africa, conducting specific training for Peace Support Operations (PSO) and training prior to actual PSO deployments, as well as through UK-based regular professional training modules offered to African officers. Second, indirectly through our support to the development of international training centres of excellence. Examples are the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre in Ghana, the Peace Support Training Centre in Kenya, the Tactical Peace Support Training Centre in Bloemfontein, South Africa and the Jaji Peacekeeping Training Wing in Nigeria. Helping to build such training centres, as well as the training of trainers, has a major multiplier effect and is in line with the UK and wider international policy for the development of African PSO capacity over the longer term.

Infantry

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when the decisions on the recent infantry re-organisation were finalised. [208326]

Mr. Ingram: The decisions announced by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence last year, 16 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 195, were approved by the Army Board at its meeting on 14 December.

Tsunami

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the British military contribution to date to assist in the tsunami relief operation; on what dates military units were deployed; and what their destinations were. [208116]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence, along with other Government Departments, has reacted quickly in responding to this disaster, with the focus being on assisting the UN through DfID, with whom we are working very closely, and providing direct relief where appropriate.

The following military assets have been assigned to assist in the relief operation in the Indian Ocean:

The frigate HMS Chatham (which carries two Lynx helicopters) was redirected to the area on 30 December, arriving on 3 January and the support ship RFA Diligence, already in the region, joined Chatham off Sri Lanka on 5 January. These vessels have undertaken a number of relief tasks, including assistance to the town of Baticoloa in the east of Sri Lanka, and provision of engineers to the Maldives to assist with refurbishment of generators and desalination equipment. Chatham and Diligence have worked closely with an Observation Liaison and Reconnaissance Team (OLRT) which deployed to Colombo on 31 December, part of which also deployed to the Maldives on 6 January.

Royal Air Force C-17 and C-130 transport aircraft have also been assisting in the aid operation since 31 December, through the delivery of UN infrastructure equipment and medical and other relief supplies into the worst affected areas.

A further OLRT deployed to Indonesia on 2 January, including to the Banda Aceh region. MOD liaison officers are deployed with the US, Australian and Indonesian military headquarters in the region.

The Indonesian Government have accepted an offer of additional technical support in the form of two helicopters from the Gurkha Garrison in Brunei. These two Bell 212s are planned to deploy to the area on 12 January.

Further, small deployments of niche capabilities such as logistics planners and engineers have also taken place in response to DfID and OLRT requests.

TRANSPORT

Departmental Equipment

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many items of electrical equipment were used by his Department in the last year for which figures are available; broken down by *(a)* cost and *(b)* number of each type of item. [205734]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department has a large and diverse estate of some 1,681 properties containing substantial amounts of electrical items from computers to plant and equipment. To provide the annual numbers and costs details for all these items would take a significant amount of time as they are not separately recorded and would be at disproportionate cost.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many electronic devices are owned by the Department, broken down by type. [207685]

Charlotte Atkins: I would refer the hon. Member to my answer given to him today (UIN ref 205734) as the same circumstances apply to providing the information on electrical equipment owned by the Department.

Documents

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what his Department's policy is in relation to the storage of documents and the use of shredders; and whether this policy has been reviewed in the past 12 months. [206763]

Charlotte Atkins: Documents are stored either close to where they are used or by an off-site storage contractor. Material of no value as a record is disposed of, preferably by recycling, as soon as it is no longer required. Documents that form part of the official record are stored until they reach the end of their retention periods or they are selected for permanent preservation and transferred to The National Archives. When they are no longer required, official records are disposed of by shredding or other appropriate means and paper is recycled where practicable. Retention periods are determined on the basis of business need and guidance issued by The National Archives. Further details can be found at: http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/recordsmanagement/.

The Department's policy on the storage and disposal of records has not changed in the past 12 months.

Driving Licences (Correct Address)

Mr. Lilley: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many people have been prosecuted for failure to provide correct addresses for their driving licences in each year since 1990. [207468]

Mr. Jamieson *[holding answer 10 January 2005]*: Any penalties subsequently imposed by courts for other offences may incorporate a penalty for non-notification, but the court statistics only record the prime offence(s). There are no statistics available for this specific offence of failure to notify changes.

E-mails

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what his Department's policy is in relation to the storage and deletion of e-mails; and whether this policy has been reviewed in the past 12 months. [206762]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department continues to implement well established policies and procedures for the review and disposal of files in accordance with its administrative needs and the Public Records Act.

E-mail messages that form part of the official record are saved for as long as business needs require and stored corporately in accordance with departmental record management procedures. Further e-mail guidance can be found at http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/electronicrecords/advice/pdf/managing_emails.pdf

The Department's staff are encouraged to limit the amount of e-mail held in electronic mailboxes and to dispose of e-mail in accordance with the policy. This policy has not changed in the last 12 months.

Entertainment Costs

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much has been spent on entertainment by his Department in each year since 1997, broken down by *(a)* food, *(b)* alcohol, *(c)* staff and *(d)* accommodation. [204354]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department for Transport was formed in May 2002 and as a result the information provided only relates to the years from 2002–03 onwards.

The Department does not keep separate records on spend on entertainment broken down between food, alcohol, staff and accommodation. For information on the costs of entertainment incurred by the central Department during 2002–03 and 2003–04, I would refer the hon. Member to the answer given to the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Laws) on 10 May 2004, *Official Report*, column 12W.

Experimental Regional Transport Board

Mr. Spring: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the remit of the Experimental Regional Transport Board for *(a)* the South East of England and *(b)* Yorkshire and the Humber is. [208044]

Charlotte Atkins: The terms of reference for the experimental boards are set out in the annex to the report "Evaluation of Experimental Regional Transport Boards" which was published on 22 December 2004. http://www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_localtrans/documents/page/dft_localtrans_033632.hcsp

Mr. Spring: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the costs were of setting up the Experimental Regional Transport Board for *(a)* the South East of England and *(b)* Yorkshire and the Humber. [208049]

Charlotte Atkins: No record was kept of the time that those involved devoted to the work of the experimental boards. The costs were effectively absorbed by their various employers.

Harbours

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what powers he has to instruct vessels to secure safe anchorage *(a)* within harbour limits and *(b)* outside harbour limits. [208155]

Mr. Jamieson: The Marine Safety Act 2003 gives the Secretary of State the power to instruct a vessel to secure safe anchorage if in his opinion an accident has occurred to or in the ship, the accident has created a risk to safety or a risk of pollution by a hazardous substance and the instruction is necessary to remove or reduce the risk.

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what factors determine his Department's policy towards the setting of harbour limits. [208156]

Mr. Jamieson: Changes to existing harbour limits or proposals for new limits are applied for by existing or candidate harbour authorities by way of harbour orders under the Harbours Act 1964. The Secretary of State will consider the applications on the merits of each case and after public consultation.

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what powers he has to determine harbour limits in England. [208158]

Mr. Jamieson: Harbour limits have been set in local legislation applying to individual harbours authorities. Changes to limits, or the setting of new limits, are made by way of harbour orders submitted under the Harbours Act 1964 to the Secretary of State for determination, and promoted by existing or potential harbour authorities.

Midland Metro

Ross Cranston: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the likely *(a)* start and *(b)* completion date for construction of the extension of the Midland Metro light rapid transit system from Wednesbury to Brierley Hill; and if he will make a statement. [207588]

Charlotte Atkins: No assessment has been made. I understand from the West Midlands Passenger Transport Executive, Centro, who are the promoters of the scheme, that they expect the construction to start mid 2007 and to be completed in 2010. This is, however, subject to powers for the extension being confirmed by Parliament and to our consideration of a final business case, which is expected to be submitted in the spring. Although the Department announced on 20 December 2004 that the Secretary of State had decided to make an Order under the Transport and Works Act giving powers for the scheme, the Order will need to be subject to special parliamentary procedure before it can come into force, as it involves the compulsory purchase of open space without other land being offered in exchange. It is expected that the Order will be laid before Parliament later this month.

Ministerial Visits

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what ministerial visits are planned for each Minister in his Department in the next six months; and if he will make a statement. [207303]

Charlotte Atkins: The Secretary of State and other Ministers in the Department for Transport expect to undertake a number of visits on Departmental business in the next six months. It is not intended to publish details of these in advance as this would create an increased security risk.

Press Officers

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many press officers are employed in the Department. [206529]

Charlotte Atkins: The number of full-time equivalent press officers employed in DfT on 1 April 2004, broken down between the central department and the agencies, is:

	Number
Transport (Central)	16
Driving Standards Agency	2
Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency	8
Highways Agency	6
Marine and Coastguard Agency	3
Vehicle Certification Agency	0
Vehicle and Operator Services Agency	1

Shipwrecks

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many vessels have run aground around the UK coastline in each of the past 10 years for which figures are available. [208157]

Mr. Jamieson: The following numbers of groundings—broken down between fishing vessels and merchant vessels (of > = 100 gt)—in UK coastal waters were reported to the Marine Accident Investigation Branch as occurring in each of the years from 1994 to 2003:

	Fishing vessels	*Merchant Vessels of > = 100gt*	*Total*
1994	60	28	88
1995	55	43	98
1996	60	51	111
1997	41	64	105
1998	45	50	95
1999	35	34	69
2000	40	23	63
2001	29	31	60
2002	27	20	47
2003	42	28	7[illegible]
Total	434	372	806

For the purposes of this answer "the UK coastline" is defined as UK territorial waters (i.e. 12 mile limit).

Waterways

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what action he has taken to ensure that waterways and canals which are navigable are not subject to development other than for transport purposes. [208171]

Mr. Jamieson: Last year my Department, along with Defra and ODPM, published a guide to planning for freight on inland waterways. This is designed to help policy makers and planners, bodies responsible for the management of the waterways, carriers and other bodies to understand how good planning can support and encourage the use of inland waterways for freight transport.

My Department also keeps in close touch with the water-freight industry, and works to encourage proper consideration of the risks and benefits for developments that might affect the potential for waterborne freight.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Departmental Staff

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what percentage of departmental staff are based in London. [208058]

Mr. Caborn: All of the Department's staff are based in London.

Motor Racing

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what meetings the Minister for Sport has recently attended regarding the future of the Formula One Grand Prix at Silverstone; and if she will make a statement. [205051]

Mr. Caborn: I attended several meetings last year where the Formula One racing at Silverstone was discussed. I am pleased that the British Racing Drivers Club have secured the future of the British Grand Prix for the next five years.

ELECTORAL COMMISSION

Freedom of Information

John Mann: To ask the hon. Member for Gosport, representing the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission, what categories of information are available under Freedom of Information legislation that have not been provided in written parliamentary answers on behalf of the Speaker's Committee in the last three years. [207778]

Mr. Viggers: I assume that the hon. Member is referring to categories of information that the Speaker's Committee had declined to provide in written parliamentary answers in the last three years. I am not aware of any occasion when such a situation has arisen.

HEALTH

Chlamydia Screening

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what his Department's policy is on chlamydia screening for men; and if he will make a statement; [208093]

(2) if he will arrange for chlamydia screening for women to be followed up by advice for their partners on access to appropriate treatment for men; and if he will make a statement. [208099]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Department's policy for chlamydia screening for men is to promote greater uptake through the national chlamydia screening programme. The national chlamydia screening programme targets sexually active men and women under 25, who are most at risk of infection. It provides a co-ordinated framework for screening which includes testing, treatment, health promotion, partner notification and contact tracing.

The Department has also commissioned the Men's Health Forum to oversee the "Men and Chlamydia" project, which aims to increase men's awareness of chlamydia, promote safer sex and encourage men to seek testing and treatment. Young men and women are also targeted with information about chlamydia through our national sexual health media campaigns, including a major new campaign to be launched later this year, as announced through the White Paper.

The Public Health White Paper, "Choosing Health: Making healthy choices easier" included a commitment to accelerate the roll-out of the national chlamydia screening programme, with the goal of making this available across the country by March 2007, backed by investment of £80 million to achieve this aim.

Conferences

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many conferences were *(a)* attended by officials from his Department, *(b)* cancelled by and *(c)* facilitated by his Department in each year since 1997; and what the (i) cost to the Department and (ii) location was in each case. [205756]

Ms Rosie Winterton: This information is not held centrally and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Correspondence

Sir Michael Spicer: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when the hon. Member for Doncaster, Central (Ms Winterton) will reply to the letter of 15 November 2004 from the hon. Member for West Worcestershire. [207979]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The letter was answered on 11 December 2004.

CPPIH

Nick Harvey: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the impact of the abolition of the Commission for Patient and Public Involvement in Health. [206909]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The abolition of the Commission for Patient and Public Involvement in Health (CPPIH) will contribute to the £500 million savings that will result from the review of all the Department's arm's length bodies. These savings will be re-invested in frontline services—this includes patients' forums. We are currently consulting patients' forums and other key stakeholders about the arrangements that will be put in place to support patients' forums once the CPPIH has been abolished.

Dentistry

Sir Paul Beresford: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the reasons are for the change in the timing of the publication of the new NHS dental patients charges regime. [206687]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 21 December 2004]:* We need to give careful consideration to all aspects of the system reform which we are undertaking. As indicated in the written statement made to the House by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Health on 10 January 2005, *Official Report*, columns 6–8WS, we will move to full implementation by April 2006. As part of these plans, we will publish new regulations for dental charging for consultation in the summer of 2005.

Mr. McLoughlin: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS dentists there were in *(a)* West Derbyshire constituency and *(b)* Derbyshire in each of the last seven years. [207446]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The earliest available information (1998) is shown in the table. For the West Derbyshire constituency area, there are three primary care trusts (PCTs)—Amber Valley PCT, Derbyshire Dales and South Derbyshire PCT and High Peaks and Dales PCT. Subtotals for these PCTs are also recorded.

Number of general and personal dental service dentists in the Derbyshire area by PCT at September each year, 1998 to 2004

PCT	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
1. Amber Valley	38	37	40	40	44	40	47
2. Derbyshire Dales and South Derbyshire	29	33	34	37	39	42	44
3. High Peak and Dales	36	41	41	44	48	52	54
Central Derby	37	45	42	44	42	43	46
Greater Derby	49	48	53	58	63	60	68
North Eastern Derbyshire	35	34	37	49	50	51	53
Subtotal of three PCTs	103	111	115	121	131	134	145
Total of above PCTs	224	238	247	272	286	288	312

Source:
Dental Practice Board.

Mr. McLoughlin: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many dentists have applied to become NHS dentists in *(a)* West Derbyshire constituency and *(b)* Derbyshire in each of the last seven years. [207447]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information shown in the table shows dentists starting work in the Derbyshire, area for the first time in the general (GDS) or personal dental service (PDS).

The number of GDS and PDS dentists starting work is shown by primary care trust (PCT) at September each year for the years 1998 to 2004. This is the earliest available data.

For West Derbyshire constituency area, there are three PCTs: Amber Valley PCT, Derbyshire Dales and South Derbyshire PCT, and High Peaks and Dales PCT. Subtotals for these PCTs are recorded in the table.

Number of general and personal dental service dentists who joined PCTs in the Derbyshire area in the 12 months to September each year, 1998 to 2004

PCT	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
1. Amber Valley	6	6	8	7	9	6	8
2. Derbyshire Dales and South Derbyshire	1	5	3	6	5	5	7
3. High Peak and Dales	4	6	7	6	8	8	9
Central Derby	7	12	6	6	7	7	6
Greater Derby	6	3	12	9	9	5	10
North Eastern Derbyshire	7	2	4	15	9	6	6
Subtotal of three PCTs	11	17	18	19	22	19	24
Total of above PCTs	31	34	40	49	47	37	46

Mr. Damian Green: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what forecast his Department has made of the number of dental practices transferring to a Personal Dental Services contract by December 2005; and if he will make a statement. [206720]

Sir Paul Beresford: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the oral answer of 7 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1029, from the Minister of State for Health, the hon. Member for Doncaster, Central (Ms Winterton), (1) whether the 2,500 dentists and 1,000 personal dental services (PDS) sites include *(a)* the original PDS pilot sites, *(b)* PDS applications and *(c)* community dental services; [206887]

(2) how many personal dental services contract applications are *(a)* pending and *(b)* were completed in each of the last 12 months. [206688]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 2 December 2004]:* As at 16 December 2004, the Department was processing 502 expressions of interest in making a proposal for a personal dental service (PDS) scheme and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Health had approved a further 109 PDS proposals that are not yet in operation.

During 2004, 802 PDS schemes became operational. Information is not held centrally on in which month in 2004 the schemes went live.

There are now some 3,500 dentists in 1,300 sites working under PDS arrangements. These figures include the original remuneration field sites managed by the NHS Modernisation Agency under the Options for Change programme, but exclude PDS applications and community dental services. We expect interest in PDS to continue to grow until, with implementation of the new contractual arrangements for national health service dentistry, the benefits of PDS are available to all NHS dentists.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the cost of travel within the UK for the Department was in each year since 1997; and how much of this was spent on *(a)* hire cars, *(b)* helicopter hire, *(c)* hotel accommodation and *(d)* subsistence. [206471]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department's total spend on travel within the United Kingdom since 1997 is shown in table 1.

Table 1

£

	Amount[1]
1997–98	6,230,714
1998–99	5,421,862
1999–2000	6,726,111
2000–01	6,948,398
2001–02	7,546,829
2002–03	7,189,396
2003–04	7,720,637

[1] The cost of hire cars is included in these amounts, but is not available separately. There has been no expenditure on helicopters.

The Department's spend on day and night subsistence within the UK is shown in table 2.

Table 2

£

	Amount[1]
1997–98	870,832
1998–99	852,272
1999–2000	1,083,664
2000–01	1,369,780
2001–02	1,392,948
2002–03	1,421,354
2003–04	2,019,014

[1] Expenditure on subsistence includes hotel accommodation, but this is not separately available.

All travel complied with the requirements of the "Ministerial Code, Travel by Ministers" and the "Civil Service Management Code".

DXA Bone Density Scanning

Joyce Quin: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list primary care trusts in England which do not have DXA bone density scanning facilities, broken down by region. [207571]

Mr. Hutton: There are over 120 hospitals in England that have at least one bone density scanner but the Department does not maintain a central record of which primary care trusts (PCTs) have dual-energy X-ray absorptiometry bone scanning facilities. PCTs will arrange for use of these scanners or alternatively buy in the service from mobile service providers as and when required.

Electronic Devices

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many electronic devices are owned by the Department, broken down by type. [207687]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department has a total of 11,719 electronic items on its asset register. This is broken down into:

	Number
Servers	502
Personal computers	5,888
Laptops	2,700
Printers	2,629

Food Colourings

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what action he is taking to protect children against hyperactive behaviour which may be caused by colourings *(a)* tartrazine (E102), *(b)* sunset yellow (E110), *(c)* camoisine (E122), *(d)* pancean 4R (E124) and *(e)* sodium benzoale (E211); and if he will make a statement. [206892]

Miss Melanie Johnson: These substances were the subject of a Government-funded study to investigate the possible link with hyperactive behaviour. The committee on toxicity of chemicals in food, consumer products and the environment assessed the outcome of this work and concluded that it was difficult to draw firm conclusions regarding the significance of the results, but that this was still an area of significant scientific uncertainty that warranted further investigation. A new study with improved experimental design is under way and is due to finish in March 2007.

Food Labelling

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the Food Labelling (Amendment) (England) (No. 2) Regulations 2004 require the mandatory labelling of homemade cakes, biscuits and jams sold in aid of charity; and if he will make a statement. [201008]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Food Labelling (Amendment) (England) (No. 2) Regulations 2004 do not apply to non pre-packed food, including that sold in aid of charity. Pre-packed food is subject to these new regulations. Many charities will continue to rely on a general exemption from this and other labelling legislation for food pre-packed for direct sale.

Hospital Food

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has to take steps to restrict the amount of *(a)* salt and *(b)* fat in hospital food. [206815]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Public procurement of food through the national health service offers an opportunity to demonstrate best practice in influencing access to healthier foods. We have made a commitment in the Government's White Paper, "Choosing Health", to develop nutritional standards for all foods provided by the NHS, increasing access to a range of healthier foods and taking account of the different formats of provision including restaurant, fast food and vending. Planning for the implementation of this is under way and more details will be available in 2005, when the Government publishes its delivery plan for the White Paper.

The Department has already engaged the NHS Purchasing and Supply Agency in discussions to reduce the salt content in processed foods supplied to NHS trusts and a salt reduction plan has been drawn up. Work to reduce fat will build on this approach.

Identity Fraud

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate he has made of the cost to the NHS of identity fraud in each year since 1997; and what estimate he has made of the *(a)* number of people who received treatment on the NHS to which they were not entitled and *(b)* total cost of this treatment in each year. [206198]

Mr. Hutton: No estimates have been made of the cost to the National Health Service of identity fraud and would not be easy to make. Figures are not collected centrally on the number of people who receive NHS treatment but are not entitled to do so, or the cost of that treatment. However, the Government take the issue seriously and issued new guidance to the NHS trusts in 2004 to prevent abuse of the NHS by people not entitled to free NHS hospital treatment.

MRSA

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many claims were made alleging that methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* was acquired as a result of clinical negligence in each quarter since 1997; [201833]

(2) what cost in each year since 1997 was incurred by the NHS as a result of claims where it was alleged that methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* was acquired as a result of clinical negligence; [201834]

(3) what estimate he has made of the percentage of claims which have been settled since 1997, where it was alleged that methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* was acquired as a result of clinical negligence. [201835]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The National Health Service Litigation Authority (NHS LA) administers the clinical negligence scheme for trusts (CNST) in England. The CNST provides indemnity against claims for clinical negligence for its members. CNST data held by the NHS LA are shown in the tables.

Table 1. Percentage of closed/settled claims since 1997 where the cause is methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA)

Status of claim	*Percentage of claims since 1997*
Closed settled claims where the cause was MRSA	0.35
Settled claims with damages paid where the cause is MRSA	0.41

Table 2. Payments made each year since 1997, where one of the causes is MRSA and the number of claims where the cause is shown as MRSA by incident year since 1997

	Payments made for claims where one of the causes is shown as MRSA	*Number of claims where one of the causes is shown as MRSA*
1997–98	—	4
1998–99	—	11
1999–2000	—	27
2000–01	999	45
2001–02	69,798	40
2002–03	230,412	29
2003–04	788,541	19
Total	1,089,750	175

Notes:

1. Claims may still be made for incidents relating to 2001–02 and later years.

2. There is no direct correlation between the columns as:

(i) claims may be successfully defended, so although a claim is made there may be no payment made against that claim.

(ii) the year of incident may be earlier than year of payment.

3. Claims may be for a number of incidents, not solely MRSA. Therefore, the level of payment made will not only relate to MRSA. MRSA may be only a small element of the claim.

4. Before 2002, lower value CNST claims were handled locally, so data will not be on the NHS LA database. These values were determined with the NHS LA on a trust by trust basis.

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many cases of MRSA and how many deaths arising there from there were at the *(a)* Sunderland Royal Hospital, *(b)* Durham University Hospital, *(c)* Hartlepool University Hospital, *(d)* North Tees Hospital and *(e)* James Cook Hospital—South Tees in each of the last five years. [204764]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Information on methicillin resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) bloodstream infections (bacteraemias) has only been collected since April 2001 and is collected by national health service trust rather than by hospital. The data for the relevant trusts are shown in the table.

The mandatory MRSA bloodstream surveillance does not collect information on deaths.

	April 2001-March 2002		*April 2002-March 2003*		*April 2003-March 2004*	
Name of NHS trust (name of hospital)	*Number of MRSA bacteraemia reports*	*MRSA rate per 1,000 bed-days*	*Number of MRSA bacteraemia reports*	*MRSA rate per 1,000 bed-days*	*Number of MRSA bacteraemia reports*	*MRSA rate per 1,000 bed-days*
City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Trust (Sunderland Royal Hospital)	41	0.15	47	0.17	56	0.22
County Durham and Darlington Acute Hospitals NHS Trust (University Hospital North Durham)	30	0.08	40	0.10	38	0.09
North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Trust (University Hospital of Hartlepool and University Hospital of North Tees)	21	0.09	19	0.08	15	0.06
South Tees Hospital NHS Trust (James Cook University Hospital)	120	0.30	96	0.23	69	0.20

Source:
Health Protection Agency

Midwives

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many midwives there were in *(a)* England, *(b)* each strategic health authority and *(c)* each primary care trust in each year since 1997, on a (i) headcount and (ii) whole-time equivalent basis. [207627]

Mr. Hutton: The number of midwives employed directly by primary care trusts is very small. Most are employed by other national health service organisations. Information on the number of midwives employed by each NHS organisation, in each year since September 1997, has been placed in the Library.

Dental Health

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when figures for the percentage of adults in each region with no natural teeth in 2003 will be available. [207671]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The general household survey results were published on the National Statistics website at www.statistics.gov.uk/ghs/ on 16 December 2004.

The table shows the percentage of adults with no natural teeth by Government office region. The percentage of adults in England with no natural teeth has fallen from 14 per cent., in the 1995 general household survey to 9 per cent., in the 2003 survey.

Percentage of adults with no natural teeth by Government office region

Persons aged 16 and over		*Great Britain: 2003*	
Government office region	*Percentage with no natural teeth*	*Weighted base (000's) = 100%*	*Unweighted sample*
England			
North East	14	1,924	750
North West	11	5,076	2,207
Yorkshire and the Humber	12	4,044	1,669
East Midlands	10	3,236	1,603
West Midlands	11	4,191	1,937
East of England	6	4,043	1,686
London	6	5,392	1,985
South East	6	6,316	2,539
South West	9	4,097	1,808
All England	9	38,319	16,184
Wales	12	2,207	1,005
Scotland	17	4,030	1,637
Great Britain	10	44,557	18,826

Source:
Office for National Statistics—2003 general household survey.

Patient Environment Action Teams

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what elements of hospital cleanliness were assessed in the process of compiling the 2004 Patient Environment Action Team (PEAT) scores for hospital cleanliness; how the elements assessed differed from those used to compile the PEAT hospital cleanliness scores in previous years; for what reasons these changes were introduced; and what further plans he has to change the PEAT hospital cleanliness assessment procedure. [205864]

Mr. Hutton: The latest patient environment action team assessment included cleanliness of the external grounds, entrances and reception areas, wards, emergency departments, other departments and waiting areas, public areas, departure lounges, toilets and bathrooms. In addition, cleanliness is a factor—directly or indirectly—in areas relating to waste handling, linen, decor, hard and soft furnishings, lifts, stairwells and staff uniforms. Previous assessments included these areas but not in the same level of detail.

The 2005 assessment has been amended to include a section relating to aspects of infection control, and discussions are under way with the Healthcare Commission about the design of the assessment from 2006.

Radiology

Dr. Richard Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the costs, including the fee for the radiologists report, of MRI scans performed in *(a)* private sector mobile MRI scanners and *(b)* NHS static scanners. [202184]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 6 December 2004]:* The exact costs of the scanning and reporting procedure is a matter of commercial confidence.

The scans performed within the central contract with Alliance will cost less than half the equivalent national health service price over the five-year period of the contract. This represents good value for money in addition to boosting NHS capacity.

Trusts are at liberty to commission services themselves from Independent Sector (IS) providers, and there are approximately 30 mobile magnetic resonance imaging scanners operating within the NHS on this basis. These are private arrangements and may vary in price depending on the provider.

Salt

Tony Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress is being made in reducing the salt content in processed food. [207859]

Miss Melanie Johnson: As part of a programme of work on reducing salt in the diet, which includes working with the industry and a public health campaign, the Food Standards Agency and the Department have received about 50 salt reduction plans from the food industry. These contain a range of commitments to reductions.

Television Advertising

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what discussions he had with broadcasters prior to the publication of proposals for limitations on advertising on children's television set out in the Public Health White Paper. [202145]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Department discussed its proposals for restrictions on the advertising and promotion of food to children, as set out in the White Paper "Choosing Health: Making Healthier Choices Easier", with the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, and with Ofcom and other key Government Departments and agencies. There were no formal discussions with individual broadcasters in the development of those proposals, although Ofcom and relevant Government Departments will be discussing the detail of the proposals with key stakeholders, including broadcasters, in due course.

Planning for the implementation of this and a number of other initiatives are under way and more details will be announced in 2005, when the Government will publish their delivery plan for the White Paper.

Tsunami

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what provisions have been put in place to allow NHS professionals and staff who wish to do so to volunteer to travel to South Asia to assist the ongoing relief effort following the tsunami disaster; and if he will make a statement. [208154]

Mr. Hutton: Advice received from the Department for International Development has confirmed that, due to the large-scale Government and public response of many countries, the affected areas are receiving adequate medical supplies and equipment and that, at present, no additional medical or nursing staff are required.

The Department is aware that some national health service staff may wish to volunteer to work in the region. This is an issue for local NHS management. This situation is being monitored regularly and should the position change, the Department would give urgent consideration to how any NHS response should be co-ordinated.

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what special assistance the NHS is offering the on-going relief effort in South Asia following the tsunami disaster; and if he will make a statement. [208160]

Mr. Hutton: Advice received from the Department for International Development has confirmed that, due to the large-scale Government and public response of many countries, the affected areas are receiving adequate medical supplies and equipment and that, at present, no additional medical or nursing staff are required. This situation is being monitored regularly and should the position change, the Department is actively considering how any national health service response would be handled.

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what provision the NHS has made to treat UK nationals returning to England from South Asia requiring care and treatment following the tsunami disaster; and if he will make a statement. [208162]

Mr. Hutton: The Department has taken strategic co-ordination of the national health service response to the repatriation of injured nationals and has activated its major incident co-ordination centre. Repatriation is on-going via three receiving airports—Heathrow, Gatwick and Manchester. At each airport reception centre, triage, care for minor injuries and referral for further treatment, as required, is being managed by the local ambulance services and NHS trusts.

In addition, as the number of people who have suffered bereavement or other psychological trauma is likely to be significant, the Department is working with the NHS, the British Red Cross and other voluntary organisations to co-ordinate the provision of counselling services to those affected. This co-ordinated approach is designed to provide quality assurance and to promote best practice in the management of acute stress and post-traumatic stress disorder.

CABINET OFFICE

Civil Service Pension Scheme

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office if he will place in the Library the analysis on which the statement that lower paid workers will benefit most from moving the civil service pension scheme to average salary calculation was based. [206051]

Mr. Milburn *[holding answer 20 December 2004]*: The document "Building a sustainable future" sets out the Cabinet Office's proposals for changes to the civil service pension arrangements. The proposed arrangements will be fairer between civil servants. Lower paid workers are one of the groups for whom the new model is more likely to be fairer.

The analysis on which this answer is based is not held in a single document but has resulted from various modelling exercises and advice from the scheme actuary, including data from previous actuarial valuations. I will place a brief note summarising the key issues in the Library.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office if she will list the equipment leasing arrangements entered into by the Office in each of the last two years; and what the cost is to public funds in each case. [202323]

Mr. Miliband: Equipment leasing arrangements and costs entered into by the Cabinet Office in each of the last two years are shown in the table.

£

	Entered into in financial year 2003/04	*Entered into in financial year 2002/03*	*Total*
Mobile telephones	12,974	11,830	24,804
Photocopiers	131,072	561,279	692,351
Laptops	31,296	748,440	779,736
Telephony	36,000	70,014	106,014
Total	211,342	1,391,563	1,602,905

Invoice Payments

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what the average length of time was between the date of invoices issued to her Department from a supplier and payment by the Department of the invoice in the last 12 months for which figures are available; what percentage of those invoices were paid within 30 days of the date of issue of the invoice; what percentage of those invoices remained unpaid after 90 days; and if she will make a statement on the Department's policy on the payment of invoices issued to it. [200612]

Mr. Miliband: Cabinet Office is a signatory to the Better Payment Practice Group, a partnership between public and private sectors, formed to improve the payment culture of the UK business community and reduce the incidence of the late payment of commercial debt. The Cabinet Office has procurement and payment procedures in place to promote payment within contractual terms and to ensure awareness of late payment legislation. Cabinet Office policy is that all invoices not in dispute should be paid within 30 days of receipt (or otherwise if specified as part of the contract.)

Cabinet Office and its agencies achieved payment of 97.79 per cent. of its invoices within its target for the period April 2003 to April 2004.

Of the 2.21 per cent. invoices paid late, 52 per cent. related to disputed invoices. We are unable to provide the age analysis of the remaining 48 per cent. except at disproportionate cost.

Comparable payment performance for the period September 2003 to September 2004 showed an increase in the number of invoices paid within the target.

During this period 97.86 per cent. of invoices paid within 30 days. 76 per cent. of the 2.14 per cent. invoices paid late were disputed invoices. We are unable to provide the age analysis of the remaining 24 per cent. without disproportionate costs.

IT Projects

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office if he will list Cabinet Office IT projects in each year since 1997, broken down by *(a)* amount spent, *(b)* purpose, *(c)* cost of overrun and *(d)* time of overrun. [205777]

Mr. Miliband: Information relating to information technology projects for each year since 1997 is not held centrally and is not separately identifiable in the Department's accounting systems. It cannot therefore be readily retrieved without incurring disproportionate cost.

Pay Television Subscriptions

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many pay television subscriptions the Department had in each year since 1997; and what the cost was in each year. [207658]

Mr. Miliband: The Cabinet Office had one pay television subscription in 1997–98. This increased to three in 1998–99; four in 2001–02 and six in 2004–05. The costs are shown in the table.

	£
1997–98	1,309
1998–99	2,068.56
1999–2000	2,494.56
2000–01	2,778.56
2001–02	4,143.56
2002–03	2,812.56
2003–04	2,714.56
2004–05	6,104.68

Press Officers

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many press officers are employed in the Cabinet Office. [206517]

Mr. Miliband: At April 2004 there were 7.5 press officers employed in the Cabinet Office press office. The .5 refers to an official whose duties were split between two roles, one being a part-time press officer.

The Cabinet Office press office numbers also include the press secretary to the Leader of the House of Commons and the press secretary to the Leader of the House of Lords.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Conferences

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many conferences were *(a)* attended by officials from his Department, *(b)* cancelled by and *(c)* facilitated by his Department in each year since 1997; and what the (i) cost to the Department and (ii) location was in each case. [205763]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID officials organise and attend many conferences both in the UK and in other countries. DFID has no central source that could provide the information required by this question without incurring a disproportionate cost.

Departmental Expenditure/Equipment

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much has been spent by his Department on *(a)* indoor bought plants, *(b)* indoor hired plants, *(c)* outdoor bought plants and *(d)* outdoor hired plants in each year since 1997. [205585]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: Amounts spent on plants by DFID over the period in question are as follows:

£

	Indoor purchased	*Outdoor purchased*	*Indoor hired*	*Outdoor hired*
1997–98	0	0	0	0
1998–99	1,758	0	0	0
1999–2000	2,049	2,538	0	0
2000–01	3,203	0	0	0
2001–02	63,785	0	270	0
2002–03	10,198	141	0	0
2003–04	16,198	0	0	0

Expenditure in 2001–02 was primarily due to refurbishment of our new Palace Street London headquarters, which included purchase of plants.

All expenditure incurred in the purchase and procurement of services and items is made in accordance with departmental guidance on financial procedures and propriety, based on principles set out in Government Accounting.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much has been spent by his Department on *(a)* new furniture and *(b)* hired furniture in each year since 1997. [205607]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID has spent the following amounts on furniture in the UK since 1997:

£

	New furniture	*Hired furniture*
1997–98	80,322	0
1998–99	189,753	0
1999–2000	213,259	0
2000–01	245,784	0
2001–02	1,224,854	0
2002–03	698,779	0
2003–04	370,180	1,577

Much of our expenditure on furniture in recent years has been associated with the refurbishment of our main UK buildings (including moving to a new London headquarters at the beginning of 2002), and has been spent on modern, smaller, workstations suited for open plan environments and flexible working arrangements such as hot-desking.

All expenditure incurred in the purchase and procurement of services and items is made in accordance with departmental guidance on financial procedures and propriety, based on principles set out in Government Accounting.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much has been spent by his Department on lighting in each year since 1997. [205876]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: Expenditure on lighting within DFID since 1997 has primarily formed part of the refurbishment works carried out on the three UK offices. The element relating to lighting, including rewiring, fittings, labour, etc., formed part of the overall project costs, and while precise figures are not available, the estimated costs of these components are as follows:

1 Palace Street (Between 2000–01 and 2001–02): £1 million

20 Victoria Street (During 2002–03): £40,000

Abercrombie House, East Kilbride (Between 2002–03 and 2003–04): £1 million.

All expenditure incurred in the purchase and procurement of services and items is made in accordance with departmental guidance on financial procedures and propriety, based on principles set out in Government Accounting.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many items of electrical equipment were used by his Department in the last year for which figures are available, broken down by *(a)* cost and *(b)* number of each type of item. [205727]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: Electrical items are not purchased or recorded centrally and therefore precise numbers, and the overall cost of such items, is not readily available and cannot be obtained without incurring a disproportionate cost. However, estimated numbers of the main categories of electrical items currently in use in the UK are as follows:

IT (PCs, Screens, Printers, cabling, etc): 4,250 separate items

Heaters and fans: 150 items

Kitchen equipment (microwaves, fridges, etc): 72 items

TV and Video equipment: 60 items

Calculators: 300 items

Photocopiers and Shredders: 70 items

European Development Fund

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will list the *(a)* study awards to and *(b)* activities undertaken by (i) AEC, (ii) AGRER and (iii) GTZ referred to in the latest audit report of the European Development Fund. [207121]

Hilary Benn: Under EDF6, contracts for management of technical assistance and study scholarship awards were concluded by open tender. Successful tendering organisations were GTZ (Gesellschaft fur Technische Zusammenarbeit—the German development co-operation implementing organisation), AEC (Association Europeenne des Conservatoires—a Commission-established cultural and educational network) and AGRER (providing studies and assistance in development assistance project implementation). Some Commission Delegations in partner countries also managed these schemes directly.

Advances were paid to Delegations in European Development Fund (EDF) partner-countries and to managing organisations in Europe as part of the normal system of financing scholarships, managing technical assistance and making payments to students.

The Commission is winding up the contracts with GTZ and AGRER. AEC is in liquidation. The advances were partially settled in 2004 (and this will appear next year in the Communication on the 2004 accounts) and further settlement will continue in 2005. Department for International Development officials are in touch with the Commission over closure of these contracts and settlement of advances.

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the doubtful debts from the Congolese account referred to in the latest audit report of the European Development Fund. [207171]

Hilary Benn: A portion of a European Development Fund (EDF) beneficiary country's allocation is deposited in a local national state bank account for disbursal on the authority of the National Authorising Officer (NAO) with approval of the European Community (EC) Head of Delegation. When the 9th EDF became operational in April 2003, all previous EDFs were consolidated into EDF9. Upon consolidation £2.744 million allocated to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) from previous EDFs remained as a full unspent balance in a local account.

When the November 2004 report of the accounts for the 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th European Development Funds (EDF) for the financial year 2003 was being prepared, the European Commission was unable to obtain information on the unspent balance from the Banque Centrale du Congo. As there had been no Commission presence in the country since 1996, in accordance with the "prudence" principle in accounting, the Commission decided to provide in full for a potential loss.

However, the Commission has since been able to confirm that all the funds are still at its disposal in the original bank account. This has been confirmed in writing by the bank. In effect, therefore, the full amount concerned has now been recovered. The recovered funds will revert for reallocation within the DRC's current EDF programme.

Iraq

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what UK development aid has been given to Iraq in each of the last five years; what the planned level of aid is for the next two years; and what percentage of his Department's budget that aid represented in each of those years. [208319]

Hilary Benn: DFID assistance to Iraq for the last five financial years, and its percentage of total DFID public spending, was:

	£ million	*Percentage*
1999–2000	6.6	0.23
2000–01	9.5	0.31
2001–02	7.8	0.24
2002–03	18.9	0.52
2003–04	209.3	5.30

All assistance to Iraq before 2003–04 was provided through UN agencies and civil society organisations. No aid was provided to the Government of Iraq during that period.

DFID's current plans for spending on Iraq, and percentage of planned DFID total public spending, are:

	£ million	Percentage
2004–05	91	2.37
2005–06	86	1.87

Total European Community assistance to Iraq in 2003 and 2004 was £318.5 million, 18 per cent. of which is attributed to the UK aid budget.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development whether departmental special advisers have written to external *(a)* bodies and *(b)* individuals in their official capacity since May 1997. [204292]

Hilary Benn: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by the then Minister for the Cabinet Office, (Ruth Kelly) on 14 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1004W.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development on how many occasions between 31 March 2002 and 31 March 2003 his special advisers travelled abroad in an [illegible]cial capacity; what places were visited; and how much each visit cost. [207181]

Hilary Benn: I refer the hon. Member to the response I gave him on 1 September 2003, *Official Report*, column 880W.

Tsunami Relief

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what aid has been provided to Sri Lanka by way of relief after the tsunami; how much of that aid has been distributed *(a)* to predominantly Tamil areas and *(b)* to predominantly Singhalese areas; and if he will make a statement. [208314]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID's humanitarian response has been channelled through United Nations agencies, the Red Cross movement, non-governmental organisations and direct interventions aimed at addressing urgent requirements and in support of the United Nations assessment, information dissemination and coordination role. We have provided three airlifts to help deliver UK non-governmental organisations' relief items, airlifted tents and tarpaulins from our stockpile and deployed six personnel to support the relief effort. The assistance that we have provided and are supporting is geographically spread throughout the country and reaches Tamil, Muslim and Singhalese areas in proportion to their needs.

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what representations he is making to the Sri Lankan Government concerning its refusal to allow Kofi Annan to visit Tamil areas affected by the tsunami; and if he will make a statement. [208315]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID has not been asked by the United Nations to make any representations to the Sri Lankan Government.

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps he is taking to ensure aid to Sri Lanka after the tsunami is being distributed to Tamil areas; and if he will make a statement. [208316]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID's humanitarian response has been channelled through United Nations agencies, the Red Cross movement, non-governmental organisations and direct interventions aimed at addressing urgent requirements and in support of the United Nations assessment, information dissemination and co-ordination role. This includes substantial support to Tamil areas in proportion to needs across the country. Our humanitarian advisers in country are monitoring the international response to ensure that aid is getting to all in need.

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development whether he has discussed with the relevant national and international bodies the possibility of individual communities devastated by the Asian earthquake being adopted by communities in the UK to raise funds for the rebuilding of a specific community; and if he will make a statement. [208227]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: The Secretary of State for International Development recently visited Indonesia and Sri Lanka, where he met with representatives of the respective Governments and of UN agencies and major NGOs. The Governments of the countries affected are leading and co-ordinating the response to this disaster, both on immediate relief and longer term reconstruction, working together with the United Nations, the World Bank, and other agencies. The UK will be following up its immediate humanitarian response with longer-term support, working within the framework set out by the Governments concerned. It is of course important that longer term reconstruction in the areas affected is properly coordinated so as to be as effective as possible.

The most immediate way that local communities in the UK can assist is by contributing to appeals by humanitarian agencies. Where there is an existing link with an affected community overseas it makes good sense to build on that relationship by offering support to the overseas community. Where no such relationship currently exists, there may well be further scope for developing twinning arrangements with the aim of providing practical support.

A first step for UK communities wishing to be involved with local communities in the recovery effort would be to consult the relevant UK Embassies and High Commissions, and UK-based community organisations of the countries affected. Most have websites giving details of the most practical and effective ways of supporting the relief and reconstruction effort. DFID is in direct contact with the Governments and agencies concerned and provides details of how individuals and organisations in the UK can help through our website: www.dfid.gov.uk.

Since the disaster, we are in contact with the Local government association about how UK local authorities might be able to work with local municipalities and authorities in the countries affected by the tsunami. Local councils and authorities are eligible to apply to

DFID's Civil Society Challenge Fund, which aims to help poor and excluded people to enhance their capacity to organise, and get their voices heard and to demand better services and better access to them.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps he is taking to ensure that the reconstruction of areas affected by the tsunami is carried out in such a way as to build in extra protection from *(a)* future such events and *(b)* flooding caused by climate change. [208350]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID will work with the governments of the countries affected by the tsunami to ensure that disaster risk reduction measures are integral to the reconstruction of the devastated areas. I plan to discuss these issues with representatives of the governments concerned at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction later this month.

Ms Keeble: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps are being taken to co-ordinate the work of the UK Government with non-governmental organisations on the tsunami disaster relief effort. [208136]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID has been in daily contact with British non-governmental organisations since the disaster struck. The Secretary of State for International Development and I met with representatives of the Disasters Emergencies Committee on 31 December and the Prime Minister and I had further discussions with them on 5 January. DFID officials hold weekly meetings with a wider group of non-governmental organisations to share operational information. We will continue to keep in close touch with non-governmental organisations here in the UK and through DFID's Country Offices during the relief phase and ensure that we maintain these strong contacts as we enter the recovery phase.

Ms Keeble: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps are being taken to monitor effectiveness of spending of donations by *(a)* the Government and *(b)* the public to the tsunami disaster relief efforts. [208138]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID has standard procedures for monitoring the effectiveness of the assistance it provides that involve careful assessment of need and considered targeting of our response from the outset. DFID sent humanitarian advisers to the region to ensure funding decisions were based on good assessment and information and were part of a co-ordinated effort. The monitoring of our assistance is supported by DFID's Country Offices. We will be following up our response with an evaluation of its effectiveness.

DFID does not monitor the effectiveness of public contributions to the relief effort. The main non-governmental organisations have their own procedures for monitoring the effectiveness of their individual responses and members of the Disasters and Emergencies Committee (DEC) are committed to subsequent evaluation of their response, for each DEC public appeal.

Vulnerable Children/HIV/AIDS

Ms Keeble: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will discuss with other *(a)* G8 and *(b)* EU member states making orphans and vulnerable children a priority during 2005. [205019]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: Our Presidencies of the G8 and the EU present an important opportunity to take action to bring the world together to make further progress to tackle HIV and AIDS.

The UK has two priorities for the G8 summit: Africa and Climate Change. DFID shall make AIDS a centrepiece of our Presidencies of the G8 and EU in 2005, and focus on AIDS at high level UN-General Assembly events, in the context of our strong commitment to Africa. The two key priorities for Ads this year are bringing the world together to tackle AIDS and maintaining HIV prevention momentum.

We have asked the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) to work with us to develop a plan of action to realise high-level, time-bound and concrete commitments to ensure delivery of the United Nations General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) Declaration at country level. In early 2005, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and the UK will co-host a high-level meeting, "Making the Money Work", to agree an action plan, within the Three Ones' concept, to underpin future co-operation between developing countries and their partners. The aim of "Making the Money Work" is to achieve consensus on ways of stepping up the response to AIDS in the most affected countries and making sure that national governments can drive forward the action they need to take with the support of international partners.

We will also be hosting the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria's second replenishment conference in September 2005. This meeting will be held alongside a broader AIDS funding meeting, building on the March event, which aims to close the financing gap for AIDS.

By the end of 2005, DFID intends to have agreement among donors and the international system on a harmonized and funded plan to tackle AIDS so that we can move forward on treatment, prevention, care for orphans and vulnerable children as well as research into better treatments, vaccines and microbicides.

Ms Keeble: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what discussions his Department has had with other *(a)* agencies and *(b)* governments on endorsing and adopting the UNAIDS/UNICEF strategic framework on orphans and vulnerable children during the global forum. [205020]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: In July this year, DFID was one of the first bilateral development agencies, along with he Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), to endorse the UNAIDS/UNICEF Framework for the protection, care and support of orphans and vulnerable children living in a world with HIV/AIDS. Since then we have taken every opportunity to promote its use with governments and other organisations working to provide protection, care and support to children affected by AIDS.

In sub-Saharan Africa, for example, our country programme teams have been engaged with the rapid assessment, analysis and action plan process. This has resulted in 16 national action plans for orphans and vulnerable children being developed. These are based on the Framework guidance.

On 16 December 2004, I spoke at the Global Partners Forum on Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) in Washington (a copy of the speech is available in the Library of the House). The Global Partners Forum provided a good opportunity for policy dialogue with other agencies. There was discussion with the World Bank, which is developing work on vulnerable children around social protection, and with representatives from the Netherlands and Norway on how we might work more closely with them in this field.

The Global Partners Forum demonstrated that the Framework is widely accepted, even if not all agencies have officially endorsed it. The key issue now is ensuring it is put into practice. A good start has been made in sub-Saharan Africa. There and in Asia, DFID will be providing at least £150 million over the next three years to support national OVC responses guided by the Framework and working closely with international partners, in particular with UNICEF.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Conferences

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many conferences were *(a)* attended by officials from his Department, *(b)* cancelled by and *(c)* facilitated by his Department in each year since 1997; and what the (i) cost to the Department and (ii) location was in each case. [205764]

Maria Eagle: The information requested is not collected centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Correspondence

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when he will respond to the letter from the hon. Member for Totnes dated 26 October 2004 about Mr. Keith Morris of Paignton and child benefit dependency increases, which was transferred from the Treasury. [207836]

Maria Eagle: I have replied to the hon. Member today.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the cost has been of criminal damage to his Department's buildings in each of the last two years. [202438]

Maria Eagle: No central records are kept and the information requested could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the running costs of the Department were in each year since 1997, broken down by *(a)* electricity, *(b)* water, *(c)* gas, *(d)* telephones, *(e)* mobile telephones and *(f)* televisions. [206671]

Maria Eagle: DWP was formed in June 2001 from the Department of Social Security (DSS) and parts of the former Department for Education and Employment, including the Employment Service (ES).

The available information is in the table.

Departmental running costs

£000

Totals	*1997–98*	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
Electricity	6,743	7,503	6,170	7,661	7,897	7,478	9,061
Water	1,553	1,701	1,392	1,534	1,736	1,516	1,868
Gas	1,666	1,902	1,563	1,903	2,031	1,782	2,185
Telephones	31,438	32,136	26,584	53,084	38,860	64,149	57,418
Mobile Telephones	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	1,286	3,551

Notes:

1. Figures for years prior to 2001–02 refer to the former DSS and ES.
2. Expenditure on mobile telephones was not collected separately prior to 2002–03.
3. Information on expenditure on televisions is not collected separately.

Pensioners (Means-tested Benefits)

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his estimate is of the number of pensioners in each region who are failing to claim means-tested income top-up. [207715]

Malcolm Wicks: The information is not available in the form requested. The most recent direct information on take-up levels of the minimum income guarantee can be found in the Department's report "Income Related Benefits: Estimates of Take-Up in 2001–2002", which is available in the Library. Corresponding estimates for 2002–03 are expected to be released later this month. Estimates of take-up in 2003–04 will cover the first six months of pension credit, which replaced the minimum income guarantee, and are expected to be released in late 2005.

Indicative, broad-brush estimates of pension credit eligibility at national and Government Office Region levels, based on 2002–03 Family Resources Survey data projected forward to 2004–05, are currently being revised consistent with pre-Budget report assumptions. The revised estimates will be available later this month.

Pensions

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many *(a)* men aged 60 to 64, *(b)* men aged 55 to 59, *(c)* men aged 50 to 54, *(d)* women aged 55 to 59 and *(e)* women aged 50 to 54 were contracted out of the state second pension into either an appropriate personal pension or a stakeholder pension in the latest year for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement on the distribution of earnings within each group. [208228]

Malcolm Wicks: The information is not available in the format requested. Such information as is available is in the following tables.

Number of men and women contracted out with an appropriate personal pension or stakeholder pension aged 50 and over

	Appropriate personal pension		Stakeholder pension	
Age group	*Men*	*Women*	*Men*	*Women*
50 to 59	476,000	89,000	[1]2,000	[1]1,000
60 to 64	19,000	[illegible]	—	—

[1] Figures are subject to a high degree of sampling error and should be used only as a guide.

Notes:

1. Figures are based on scheme membership at the end of the 2002–03 tax year, the latest year for which the information is available.

2. They include those with earnings below the LEL (for example people on a career break or who are unemployed) who would not qualify for an age-related rebate for the 2002–03 tax year.

Source:

"Second Tier Pension Provision" published by the Department for Work and Pensions using the Lifetime Labour Market Database which uses a 1 per cent. sample of national insurance records.

Earnings distribution of men and women of all age groups contracted out with an appropriate personal pension or stakeholder pension

	Appropriate personal pension		Stakeholder pension	
Earnings distribution	*Men*	*Women*	*Men*	*Women*
Up to £4,999	1,354,000	1,070,000	[1]7,000	[1]5,000
£5,000 to £9,999	202,000	238,000	[1]4,000	[1]6,000
£10,000 to £14,999	376,000	237,000	9,000	11,000
£15,000 to £19,999	495,000	168,000	10,000	[1]5,000
£20,000 to £24,999	393,000	102,000	9,000	[1]5,000
£25,000 to 29,999	289,000	70,000	7,000	[1]2,000
£30,000 and over	364,000	69,000	8,000	[1]2,000

[1] Figures are subject to a high degree of sampling error and should be used only as a guide.

Notes:

1. Figures are based on scheme membership at the end of the 2002–03 tax year, the latest year for which the information is available.

2. They include those with earnings below the LEL (for example people on a career break or who are unemployed) who would not qualify for an age-related rebate for the 2002–03 tax year.

Source:

"Second Tier Pension Provision" published by the Department for Work and Pensions using the Lifetime Labour Market Database which uses a 1 per cent. sample of national insurance records.

Quangos

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much has been spent by his Department in each year since 1997 on taskforces and similar bodies. [204715]

Maria Eagle: Since 1997 the Department has established two taskforces, the Employers Task Force on Pensions in June 2003 and the Ethnic Minority Employment Task Force in September 2003. It is not possible to disaggregate expenditure on taskforces from the overall administrative running costs of the Department.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions on how many occasions between 31 March 2002 and 31 March 2003 his special advisers travelled abroad in an official capacity; what places were visited; and how much each visit cost. [207172]

Maria Eagle: All travel by special advisers is undertaken in accordance with the guidelines set out in the Ministerial Code and the Civil Service Management Code.

Departmental special advisers travelled abroad on one occasion to Boston and Washington, USA at a cost of £4,900.00.

Winter Fuel Allowance

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many pensioners did not receive winter fuel allowance payments in 2004 in *(a)* England and *(b)* each local authority area due to administrative errors; when such pensioners can expect to receive their entitlement; if he will make it his policy to pay interest on delayed payments based upon the time elapsed between the date on which the payment should have been made and the date when the payment is actually received; and what steps he is taking to prevent further such problems from occurring. [208356]

Malcolm Wicks: 11.5 million pensioners were sent their winter fuel payments before Christmas as planned. 4,503 of these payments could not be delivered. We are investigating these but most could not be delivered because customers had failed to report changes to either their address or bank account. The final date for claims to be received is 30 March 2005. We expect to have sent the last payments by early June.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

MPs' Children

John Mann: To ask the Leader of the House what estimate he has made of the number of hon. Members who *(a)* have children at school and *(b)* have children at school within or near to their constituency. [207881]

Mr. Hain: This information is not held centrally.

Rail Season Tickets

John Mann: To ask the Leader of the House what assessment has been made of the merits of providing hon. Members with annual rail season tickets. [207788]

Mr. Hain: I understand that hon. Members are encouraged to take advantage of annual rail season tickets where these provide value for money.

I refer the hon. Member to Paragraph 7.1.14 of the Green Book on Parliamentary Salaries, Allowances and Pensions. This explains that Members can claim rail season tickets to Westminster if they make, or expect to make, four return journeys per week to Westminster during sitting weeks. I suggest that Members who have other patterns of parliamentary travel and believe that a season-ticket would provide value for money should discuss their needs with the Department of Finance and Administration.

WALES

E-mails

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement on his Department's policy regarding the retention of e-mails in electronic form *(a)* after and *(b)* up to 1 January 2005; and what instructions have been given regarding the deletion of e-mails prior to 1 January 2005. [206947]

Mr. Hain: The Wales Office continues to implement well established policies and procedures for the review and disposal of files in accordance with its administrative needs and the Public Records Act.

E-mail messages that form part of the official record are saved for as long as business needs require and stored corporately in accordance with departmental record management procedures. Further e-mail guidance is available on the National Archives website at: http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/electronicrecords/advice/pdf/managing emails.pdf.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales on how many occasions between 31 March 2002 and 31 March 2003 his special advisers travelled abroad in an official capacity; what places were visited; and how much each visit cost. [207184]

Mr. Hain: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to him on 8 September 2003, *Official Report*, column 38W.

All travel by special advisers is undertaken in accordance with the guidelines set out in the "Ministerial Code" and the "Civil Service Management Code".

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Arms Exports (Indonesia)

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what amount is outstanding from the sale of *(a)* Scorpion and Stormer vehicles and *(b)* Hawk jets to Indonesia; and over what period payments are due to be made. [206155]

Mr. Alexander *[holding answer 21 December 2004]*: The amounts outstanding as at December 2004 were:

(a) Scorpion and Stormer vehicles—£80.7 million

(b) Hawk jets—£382.7 million.

Through the Paris Club, Indonesian debt has been rescheduled under three agreements. The last payment is due in June 2021.

Business Support Initiatives

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to the answer of 7 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 465W, on Business Support Initiatives, what core UK Trade and Investment services are *(a)* free and *(b)* subsidised; and at what cost to the Government. [206919]

Mr. Alexander: Advice and information made available through UKTI's website, information centre and inquiry service is free. UKTI's Export Communications Review Scheme, Market Visit Support, Inward Mission Scheme, and Solo Show Support are subsidised. Two UKTI products—OMIS (Overseas Market Introduction Service) and NPFB (New Products from Britain) are chargeable, but at highly subsidised rates to customers.

UKTI's products are paid for through its programme budget, currently around £100 million. Some four-fifths of this is estimated to go on support delivered directly to individual companies. There are also administration costs associated with delivery of the services concerned.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the running costs of the Department were in each year since 1997, broken down by *(a)* electricity, *(b)* water, *(c)* gas, *(d)* telephones, *(e)* mobile telephones and *(f)* televisions. [206669]

Jacqui Smith: The running costs for DTI HQ estate in respect of utilities since 1997 is based on available information. The figures are as follows.

	Electricity (£000)	Water (£000)	Gas (£000)
2003-04	957	90	137
2002-03	942	137	103
2001-02	855	137	121
2000-01	929	171	115
1999-2000	1,036	165	100
1998-99	917	151	108
1997-98	1,065	n/a	108

	Telephony (£000)	Mobile telephony[1] (£000)
2003	3,898	410
2002	3,792	343
2001	3,668	343
2000	3,477	227
1999	2,837	263
1998	3,099	91

[1] Centrally managed contracts.

(f) Televisions. Information is not held centrally.

Fast Patrol Vessel Defender

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what progress the Government office for the east of England, in conjunction with her Department, has made in ascertaining details of the acquisition, whereabouts and condition of the Fast Patrol Vessel Defender, donated by the Sultan of Oman to Lowestoft. [207721]

Mr. Alexander: The Government office has been informed of the condition of the vessel by Lowestoft Maritime Defence Museum Ltd., and that it has been sold. The company has reported that the condition of the vessel had deteriorated, and has provided a marine surveyor's assessment from December 2003 with details. The company has explained that it considered that maintenance of the vessel was not economically viable and decided to sell it.

Minimum Wage

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many people in Pendle received the minimum wage in each year since its introduction. [204082]

Mr. Sutcliffe: It is unlikely that figures will be obtainable for Pendle due to small sample size.

The latest low pay data from the ONS show that 1.1 million people in the UK stood to benefit from the October 2004 uprating of the national minimum wage. The DTI will provide estimates of national minimum wage beneficiaries by region as soon as possible. These figures will be made available in the Libraries of the House.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many people in Coventry received the minimum wage in each year since its introduction. [205307]

Mr. Sutcliffe *[holding answer 20 December 2004]*: It is unlikely that figures will be obtainable for Coventry due to small sample size.

The latest low pay data from the ONS show that 1.1 million people in the UK stood to benefit from the October 2004 uprating of the National Minimum Wage. The DTI will provide estimates of National Minimum Wage beneficiaries by region as soon as possible. These figures will be made available in the Libraries of the House.

Mr. David Crausby: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many workers in Bolton, North-East have benefited from the national minimum wage. [203370]

Mr. Sutcliffe: It is unlikely that figures will be obtainable for Bolton North East due to small sample size.

The latest low pay data from the ONS show that 1.1 million people in the UK stood to benefit from the October 2004 uprating of the National Minimum Wage. The DTI will provide estimates of National Minimum Wage beneficiaries by region as soon as possible. These figures will be made available in the Libraries of the House.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many people have benefited from the introduction of the National Minimum Wage in each year since its introduction in *(a)* Stroud, *(b)* Gloucestershire and *(c)* South West England. [204910]

Mr. Sutcliffe: It is unlikely that figures will be obtainable for Stroud and Gloucestershire due to small sample size.

The latest low pay data from the ONS show that 1.1 million people in the UK stood to benefit from the October 2004 uprating of the National Minimum Wage. The DTI will provide estimates of National Minimum Wage beneficiaries by region as soon as possible. These figures will be made available in the Libraries of the House.

Retired Miners' Concessionary Fuel Schemes

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what the *(a)* total cost and *(b)* number of beneficiaries of the retired miners' concessionary fuel scheme was in each year since 1997, broken down by (i) solid fuel and (ii) cash-in-lieu of solid fuel; [206926]

(2) what the level of entitlement to concessionary fuel is for each of the client groups entitled to receive it under the retired miners' scheme; and what the cash-in-lieu rates are. [206927]

Nigel Griffiths: There are two main agreements in force the first of which is the National Concessionary Fuel Agreement that covers former mineworkers, clerical staff, officials and weekly paid industrial staff and the second of which is for former managerial grades of the British Coal Corporation—the British Association of Colliery Managers (BACM) agreement.

	Average annual tonnage	*Cash rates (£) from 1 October 2004*
National concessionary fuel agreement		
Full Householder level	4.2	276.52
Quasi Householder level	2.8	184.34
Sub Householder level	1.4	92.18
B.A.C.M.		
Full Householder Level	3.1	621.37
Quasi Householder level	2.05	466.03
Special rate of Cash in Lieu		92.18

Notes:

1. The Full Householder level of entitlement typically covers a three main room property where the beneficiary and his spouse are the sole owners or tenants of the property.
2. The Quasi Householder level of entitlement typically covers a two main room property where the beneficiary and his spouse are the owners or tenants of the property.
3. The Sub Householder level typically covers bedsit type properties or where the beneficiary has moved to live with relatives or, in the case of cash in lieu, has moved into residential care.
4. The special rate of Cash in lieu is paid where the beneficiary lives with relatives or in residential care.
5. The annual entitlement of fuel for any given beneficiary will vary according to the coalfield region he was previously employed in and the type of fuel burnt e.g. house coal, Anthracite, coke etc

Supermarkets

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when she plans to publish the Office of Fair Trading audit following its February 2004 report into the operation of the Supermarket Code of Practice; and if she will make a statement. [206230]

Mr. Sutcliffe *[holding answer 20 December 2004]*: As I said in my answer to the hon. Member's question on 7 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 476W; this is a matter for the Chairman of the OFT and I have asked him to write to the hon. Member directly.

Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive

Mr. Salter: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations have been made by her Department to the European Commission in relation to the introduction of individual producer responsibility and the use of financial guarantees in relation to the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive; and what responses have been received. [207760]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The Department has provided the Commission with its draft implementing Regulations for the EU Directive on Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment, on which it consulted last autumn. Officials from the Department have discussed these issues with the Commission and other member states, including at meetings of the Technical Adaptation Committee. However, the Commission has taken no position in advance of receiving notification of transposing legislation.

Mr. Salter: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the approaches of the *(a)* French and *(b)* German Governments to implementation of individual producer responsibility under the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive. [207761]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The French and German Governments have produced draft framework legislation for their national implementations of the EU Directive on Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment. It remains to be seen how individual producer responsibility will be implemented in detailed, practical terms.

Renewable Energy

Mr. Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans she has to attend conferences which highlight the alternatives to wind power. [207465]

Ms Hewitt: I will be attending the Marine Renewable Energy Conference on 3 March. You will also be aware that I opened the British Hydro Conference, which was hosted by the DTI, held in December and attended the Investing in Wave and Tidal Energy Seminar in November.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Census Records

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs pursuant to his answer of 15 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1204W, on census records, if he will place in the Library the full text of the Advisory Council on Public Records and Archives (ACPRA) October 1998 statement about the closure of census records; what advice he has received from the ACPRA about the closure period for future censuses; and if he will make a statement. [207724]

Mr. Leslie: Following its meeting in December 1998, the Advisory Council set out its position on this matter as follows:

> "The Council considered the appropriateness of the closure period of 100 years which applied to the decennial census of population. It concluded that since undertakings of confidentiality had been given in the past by successive governments to people making returns, any reduction in the closure period for censuses up to that taken in 1991 would be a breach of confidence. It also felt, however, that a shorter period, of 80 years for instance, might be appropriate for future censuses."

The Advisory Council's conclusion was published in its annual report for 1998–99. A copy of this, together with the annual report of the Keeper of Public Records, is available in the Library.

In December 2003 the Council considered the matter again and concluded that it had no reason to alter its previous advice.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what advice he has received from the Advisory Council on Public Records and Archives on the availability of census records under the Freedom of Information Act 2000; and if he will make a statement. [207725]

Mr. Leslie: In December 2003 The Advisory Council on National Records and Archives reaffirmed its views on the release of decennial census returns that were published in 1998–99. It has not considered the implications of the Freedom of Information Act for this issue.

Confidential Waste

Norman Baker: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what volume of shredded confidential waste has been disposed of in each year of his Department's existence. [207200]

Mr. Lammy *[Holding answer 10 January 2005]:* My Department does not hold a central record of the volume of confidential waste disposed that is shredded. Such information could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how much has been spent by the Department on lighting in each year since 1997. [205875]

Mr. Lammy: This information is not readily available and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Ethnic Minorities

Keith Vaz: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what assessment he has made of the extent to which his Department's policies meet the needs of ethnic minorities. [205564]

Mr. Lammy: The Department is committed to providing equal opportunities for all, irrespective of ethnicity, gender, transgender, sexuality, disability, age, religion, race, marital status, working patterns and/or caring responsibilities.

In compliance with the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000, the Department for Constitutional Affairs, formerly the Lord Chancellor's Department, set out a comprehensive strategy to promote race equality in carrying out its functions, in the DCA's Race Equality Scheme published on 31 May 2002. The Race Equality Scheme is currently under review and will be implemented in May 2005.

The Department is now engaged in a major programme of diversity change, to ensure that our work meets the needs of ethnic minority clients and staff.

In February 2004, "Minority Report", a review of DCA diversity structures and strategy, was published. The Report set out 15 key recommendations in relation to improving DCA performance in diversity, which are being implemented as part of our new Diversity Agenda Programme (DAP). Two of the key projects in this programme are:

Developing Policy and Strategy

Compliance with Legislation

The Compliance with Legislation and Developing Policy strands of the DAP will provide the framework for a continuous programme of consultation, assessment and implementation of policies. We will be applying Race Impact assessments to ensure that the Department's policies meet the needs of black and minority ethnic communities.

The benefits of the DAP will be realized by the whole Department, including the magistrates courts, by supporting work against our PSA targets and supporting the DCA's five-year strategy.

European Data Protection Supervisor

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will make a statement on the *(a)* mandate and *(b)* powers of the European Data Protection Supervisor in respect of information required to be collected under European Communities legislation. [207286]

Mr. Leslie: The European Data Protection Supervisor is the independent supervisory body entrusted with monitoring the application, to Community institutions and bodies, of Community instruments relating to the protection of natural persons as regards the processing of personal data and the free movement of such data.

The European Data Protection Supervisor's powers are set out in Article 47 of Regulation (EC) No. 45/2001. These include powers to order the rectification, blocking, erasure or destruction of all data when they have been processed in breach of the provisions governing the processing of personal data and the notification of such actions to third parties to whom the data have been disclosed; to refer a matter to the Community institution or body concerned and, if necessary, to the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission; to intervene in actions brought before the Court of Justice of the European Communities; and to obtain from a Community institution or body access to all personal data and to all information necessary for his or her enquiries.

Magistrates

John Mann: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what percentage of magistrates are from *(a)* manual trade backgrounds and *(b)* social class A on the latest date for which figures are available. [207785]

Mr. Leslie: A survey of active magistrates was carried out in May 2004 to identify the make-up of the magistracy with a view to using the data received to aid recruitment and improve the diversity of the Bench. Some 78 per cent. of magistrates responded to the survey. They self-classified themselves in the following categories, which are based on Labour Force Survey definitions:

	Percentage
Managers and senior officials	28
Professional occupations	34
Associate professional and technical	13
Administrative and secretarial	13
Skilled trades and occupations	4
Personal services occupations	2
Sales and customer services	3
Process plant and machine operatives	1
Other occupations	1

Parliamentary Questions

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs when he will reply to the question tabled on 3 December 2004, by the hon. Member for New Forest, East, ref 203344. [208329]

Mr. Leslie: I replied to the hon. Member for New Forest on 11 January.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Bahrain

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Government of Bahrain concerning human rights since 2002; and if he will make a statement. [207698]

Mr. Rammell: We are in regular contact with the Bahraini Government on human rights issues, and follow developments in Bahrain closely. We are aware that there is still work to be done but we welcome the progress Bahrain is making in promoting and protecting human rights. We continue to support the King's continuing programme of reform.

China

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Government of China regarding *(a)* the recent actions taken against house churches in China and *(b)* the imprisonment of Christians, with particular reference to Pastor Zhang Rongliang and Pastor Cai Zhuohua. [207053]

Mr. Rammell: We are deeply concerned about religious freedom in China and monitor the situation closely.

At the latest round of the UK China Human Rights Dialogue, held in Beijing on 22 November, we raised our concern that the prohibition of some religious and spiritual groups and the restrictions and harassment of others undermines freedom of religious belief in China.

Foreign and Commonwealth Office officials also raised several concerns about religious freedom, including incidents of the mass arrests of religious practitioners in Xinjiang, Kaifeng and Wuhan with Wang Zuo'an, the Deputy Director General for the State Administration of Religious Affairs during his visit to the UK in September 2004.

We are aware of Pastor Zhang's case and are concerned about his detention. We raised his case with the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) on 4 December and again on 23 December. The Dutch Presidency on behalf of the EU also wrote to the Chinese MFA on 22 December.

We have asked our embassy in Beijing to make further enquiries about the case of Cai Zhuohua.

Departmental Credit Cards

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many credit cards for official expenditure are held by his Department. [206433]

Mr. Rammell: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office currently has 210 cards in use in the UK.

As our posts overseas have devolved financial authority we do not keep central records on the number of cards they hold. This figure could be supplied only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Properties

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many properties are held by the Department; what total floor space these properties provide; how many properties are vacant; and how much floor space vacant properties comprise. [206485]

Mr. Rammell: The Foreign and Commonwealth (FCO) holds the following properties in the United Kingdom (none are vacant) with floor space as shown.

	Square metres
Main FCO Building, King Charles Street	39.000
Old Admiralty Building	13.000
1 Carlton Gardens	2,500
Lancaster House	3,400
Albert Embankment (shared with the Home Office)	1,300
Apollo House, Croydon	3,100
Hanslope Park, Milton Keynes	22.000
Wiston House (Wilton Park Agency)	2.500
Total	86,800

There are more than 4,300 properties of different kinds in the overseas estate. Day-to-day management of these is devolved to our overseas posts. Details of precise numbers, floor space and occupancy could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Electronic Devices

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many electronic devices are owned by the Department, broken down by type. [207683]

Mr. Rammell: As at 31 March 2004, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's fixed asset register showed that it owns:

798 items of technical equipment

570 items of office machinery

151 items of communications systems

These items may be single or grouped assets with an individual value of £3,000 or more. A full record of electronic items of less than £3,000 in value held by the Department's global network of posts could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

E-mails

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on his Department's policy regarding the retention of e-mails in electronic form *(a)* after and *(b)* up to 1 January 2005; and what instructions have been given regarding the deletion of e-mails prior to 1 January 2005. [206961]

Mr. Rammell: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Guildford (Sue Doughty) on 11 January 2005 (UIN 206760). There has been no change to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) policy on retention or deletion of e-mails since 1 January 2005. E-mails required for the official record are stored in the FCO's electronic records management system.

EU Conventions (Ratification)

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs which Conventions agreed by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe have not been ratified by the UK since 1997. [207219]

Mr. Rammell: The UK has signed but not yet completed the ratification process of the following Council of Europe Conventions since 1997:

Revised European social charter;

Civil law convention on corruption;

European convention on the promotion of a transnational long-term voluntary service for young people;

Additional protocol to the European agreement on the transmission of applications for legal aid;

Additional protocol to the Convention for the protection of individuals with regard to automatic processing of personal data, regarding supervisory authorities and transborder data flows;

Second additional protocol to the European Convention on mutual assistance in criminal matters;

Convention on cybercrime;

Protocol amending the European convention on the suppression of terrorism;

Convention for the protection of animals during international transport (revised);

Protocol No 14 to European Convention on human rights, amending the control system

EU Member States (Borders)

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list those areas of *(a)* current and *(b)* prospective EU member states where border definition is in dispute. [207074]

Mr. MacShane: Border definition (ie the demarcation of borders between two internationally recognised sovereign states with an adjoining territorial or maritime border) is politically disputed as follows:

(a) Current EU states:

Greece—Turkey (eastern Aegean)

Ireland—UK (Lough Foyle, Carlingford Lough—quiescent)

Portugal—Spain (Olivenza)

Slovenia—Croatia (Piran Bay/Dragonja River and Sveta Gera/Trvdin Vrh)

Spain—UK (Isthmus Gibraltar)

Spain—Morocco (Ceuta, Melilla)

(b) Prospective EU states (in addition to those listed above):

Macedonia—Serbia and Montenegro (Kosovo: north west Shara Mountain region and Kudra Fura elevation)

Romania—Ukraine (Serpent's Island)

Turkey—Armenia

In addition, Cyprus joined the EU as a divided island on 1 May 2004. The EU acquis is suspended in northern Cyprus which Turkey recognises as the so-called "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus".

EU Sugar Regime

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether his Department has undertaken studies of the possible impact of the proposed reform of the EU sugar regime on the internal security situation in Jamaica in relation to the flow of narcotics and illegal weapons to the United Kingdom. [206923]

Mr. Rammell: We are aware of concerns about the implications of reform to the EU sugar regime for the Jamaican economy and society. We have discussed these concerns with the Jamaican Government at a senior level, and with other interested parties.

In recognition of the impact that reform of the EU sugar regime will have on African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) sugar producers, the European Commission has undertaken to initiate dialogue with the affected ACP countries, including Jamaica, on the basis of an Action Plan. This will be used to define appropriate accompanying measures. These are likely to include financial assistance and help with diversification where restructuring and improvements in competitiveness in the sugar sector are not sustainable.

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether his Department plans to discuss with the Jamaican Minister of National Security in January 2005 the possible effects upon the security situation in Jamaica of a drop in the price for sugar under the EU Sugar Regime. [206938]

Mr. Rammell: The Jamaican Minister for National Security plans to visit the UK in January 2005. We expect discussions to cover cooperation with Jamaica and other Caribbean states on security matters, and to include the impact on Jamaica of reform to the EU Sugar Regime.

European Constitution

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to paragraph 17 of the Explanatory Memorandum on the EU constitutional treaty, if he will make a statement on the stopwatch start point for the six-week review period for Parliament; and how this power differs from existing mechanisms. [207098]

Mr. MacShane: Under the subsidiarity mechanism set out in the EU constitutional treaty, the six-week review period would start from the date of transmission of a draft European legislative Act. This would ensure that national parliaments have an active voice in the EU's law making procedures at EU level for the first time. Article 7 of the Protocol on the Application of the Principles of Subsidiarity and Proportionality sets out how this would work in practice:

> "Each national Parliament shall have two votes, shared on the basis of the national Parliamentary system. In the case of a bicameral Parliamentary system, each of the two chambers shall have one vote.
>
> Where reasoned opinions on a draft European legislative act's non-compliance with the principle of subsidiarity represent at least one third of all the votes allocated to the national Parliaments in accordance with the second paragraph (above) the draft must be reviewed."

In practice any proposal meeting such opposition would be very unlikely to prosper.

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs which amendments proposed by the Government to the draft European constitution were not accepted during the Convention stage; and what the text was of the articles in question *(a)* in the text submitted by the Convention and *(b)* in the final text. [207100]

Mr. MacShane: Full details of all amendments proposed during the Convention on the Future of Europe are available on the Convention website: www.european-convention.eu.int. The draft treaty published by the Convention, also on the website, includes those amendments which were accepted by the Convention. The final treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe was placed in the Library of the House on 8 December 2004 (Command Paper 6429). The Government will shortly publish an analysis of the EU constitutional treaty indicating which parts of the EU constitution correspond to provisions in the existing treaties and which parts are new. Beyond this, the Government do not propose to further process this publicly available information, since it could be done only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the Presidencies that will exist under the European constitution; what budgets each will manage; how many civil servants each will have; and if he will make a statement. [207264]

Mr. MacShane: The constitutional treaty provides for the replacement of the existing six-monthly rotating Presidency by a "Team Presidency" system. A European Council decision attached to the Treaty in a Declaration provides that all Councils (other than the Foreign Affairs Council) will be chaired by a team of three member states holding the Presidency for 18 months. The cost of each Presidency would continue to be met by the relevant host government(s) which would also continue to determine the number of civil servants it allocates to EU work during its Presidency. The Constitutional Treaty also introduces a new full time President of the European Council, to be elected by and accountable to the members of the European Council. Since the Treaty has not yet come into force, arrangements regarding funding and staffing of the Office of the President of the European Council have not yet been agreed.

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to his answer of 21 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1620W, on the EU Constitution, whether a possible reweighting of votes under the proposed EU Constitution was discussed with the German Chancellor by *(a)* the Prime Minister and *(b)* a Foreign Office Minister. [208355]

Mr. MacShane: No.

Free Trade Area

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make the establishment of a free trade area including the EU and the US a priority for the UK Presidency of the EU. [208077]

Mr. MacShane: The UK Government intend to take forward during its Presidency of the EU the work being undertaken to deepen the economic partnership between the EU and the US. At the EU-US summit in Ireland in June 2004, both sides committed themselves

> "to engage in a vigorous discussion of concrete ideas on how to further transatlantic economic integration to the fullest, spur innovation and job creation and better realise the competitive potential of our economies and enterprises"

and to

> "develop a forward-looking strategy to enhance our economic partnership and eliminate barriers".

Securing progress on the Doha Round of trade negotiations at the WTO ministerial meeting in December is a UK Government priority for 2005.

Greece

Richard Burden: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what inquiries have been made of the Greek authorities by his Department about why the coroners office in Greece are confirming possession of only some of the organs of the late Russell Christopher Anderson of Birmingham; and if he will make a statement. [206831]

Mr. Mullin: Our consular staff maintained a regular dialogue with the Greek authorities during the investigation of Russell Anderson's case. In autumn 2003 they contacted the Greek pathologist who stated that he was holding parts of Russell's organs, but that the whole organs were no longer available. Our staff forwarded a letter to Mrs. Anderson on 13 November 2003 confirming this.

During autopsies in Greece, organs can be removed for testing at the discretion of the doctor, without consent of the next of kin. Any organs removed are retained for the duration of the tests, after which they are normally destroyed. The Greek state does not recognise that organs, or parts of organs, removed in these circumstances belong to anyone other than the state, since they are removed and examined as part of a legal or criminal investigation.

I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave him on 15 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1199W, which explained how Russell's family can apply for the return of the parts of his organs still held by the Greek authorities.

International Arms Treaty

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he has taken to promote the proposed international arms trade treaty. [207611]

Mr. MacShane: The Government strongly believe that an international arms trade treaty should be negotiated. We are working to help build the broad international support which is necessary for negotiations to begin. We have already discussed the issue with other countries who have declared their support in principle for such a treaty, and others. We will continue to use our bilateral contacts and take action in multilateral fora where appropriate to pursue this objective.

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what responses he has received from his international counterparts regarding the proposed international arms treaty. [207612]

Mr. MacShane: Discussions with other countries with respect to an arms trade treaty are at an early stage. However, several countries have already expressed a clear interest in supporting a treaty.

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether a timetable has been drawn up for the *(a)* agreement and *(b)* implementation of the proposed international arms treaty; and if he will make a statement. [207613]

Mr. MacShane: No timetable for the agreement of an arms trade treaty has yet been agreed. The Government hope that negotiations could begin as soon as possible, once there is sufficient international support.

Kaliningrad

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on his policy towards the future status of Kaliningrad. [207076]

Mr. Rammell: The UK supports the EU's policy of pursuing constructive discussion with Russia on issues relating to Kaliningrad. The EU and Russia agreed joint statements on the Kaliningrad region on 11 November 2002 and 27 April 2004. Copies can be found at the following links:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/russia/summit_11_02/js_kalin.htm

http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/russia/russia_docs/js_elarg_270404.htm

The joint statements acknowledge the unique situation of the Kaliningrad region as part of the Russian Federation, but separated from the rest of the federation by other states, and agree to make a special effort to accommodate the concerns of both sides relating to the transit of persons and goods between the Kaliningrad region and other parts of Russia, and to intensify their co-operation to promote the social and economic development of the region as a whole. The UK supports the implementation of the commitments in the two joint statements.

Light Weapons Unit

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the nature of planned EU assistance to ECOWAS for the establishment of a light weapons unit; what the role of EU personnel will be in such assistance; which EU directorate will take the lead; from which budget line such funding will be taken; and what the likely UK components of that assistance will include. [207153]

Mr. MacShane: To assist with the Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) project the EU plans to give financial assistance to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) amounting to €515,000 and to second one project director. The project director will provide advice on SALW issues and prepare regional contacts for a seminar on the possible transformation of the ECOWAS Moratorium on SALW into a regional convention by the end of December 2005. The Commission will conclude a financing agreement with ECOWAS regarding the conditions of use of the European Union contribution, which shall be in the form of non-repayable aid. The project will be funded from the Common Foreign and Security budget line within the External Actions category—as such, member states will have the lead in overseeing the implementation of the project, supported by the Council Secretariat and in close co-operation with the Commission. The UK's share of the contribution from the Common Foreign and Security Policy budget will amount to €92,000.

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what requirement there is for the EU contribution to ECOWAS for the establishment of a Light Weapons Unit to be separately accounted for in EU accounts. [207248]

Mr. MacShane: For the project to be separately accounted for in the EU accounts, it would require the creation of a separate budget line. The Government see no need for a separate budget line for this specific project as the financial details are scrutinised by all member states prior to adoption. The EU contribution towards the small arms and light weapons project of the Economic Community of West African States will be financed from the non-proliferation projects line of the Common Foreign and Security Policy budget line, part of the external actions budget. The financial note detailing all financial expenditure was scrutinised by member states, and agreed by unanimity, who will retain oversight of the project. In addition, budget lines are created on a multi-annual basis for areas of activity not for individual projects.

Pay Television Subscriptions

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many pay television subscriptions the Department had in each year since 1997; and what the cost was in each year. [207661]

Mr. Rammell: The majority of all pay television subscriptions are purchased overseas for the provision of 24-hour news coverage to the Department's global network of posts. On average, posts purchase two subscriptions each at an annual cost of £380 per subscription (2003–04 costs). The information is not held centrally but we estimate that the total costs for the UK and overseas to be around £200,000.

European Union (Qualified Majority Voting)

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many areas of unanimity have become subject to qualified majority voting decisions since 1 May 1997; and in how many areas unanimity is still required. [207092]

Mr. MacShane: As stated in the White Paper on the treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe (CM 6309), qualified majority voting was extended to 16 new or existing areas by the Amsterdam treaty, which came into effect in May 1999, and further extended to 31 new or existing areas by the Nice treaty, which came into effect in February 2003. Unanimous agreement is still required for the most important decisions: for tax, social security, foreign policy, defence, and decisions on the financing of the EU affecting the British budget contribution. That remains true under the new constitutional treaty.

Sudan

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Sudanese authorities concerning the attack by the Government of Sudan air force on three villages east of Nyala in Darfur on 9 to 10 December and on one village south of Nyala on 7 December. [206818]

Mr. Mullin: We condemn the recent attacks by the Government of Sudan in Darfur, which are a clear breach of the Abuja Security Protocol and the Government of Sudan's commitment to abide by UN Security Council resolutions. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Development raised this issue on Thursday 16 December with the Presidential Adviser for Political Affairs, and our Ambassador in Khartoum has also raised the matter with the Acting Foreign Minister.

European Union (Whistleblowers)

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations the

UK Government have received *(a)* from and *(b)* concerning whistleblowers in European Union institutions. [207256]

Mr. MacShane: On *(a)*, we are not aware of any such representations having been made.

On *(b)*, many members of the public, as well as hon. Members of this House, and Peers in the House of Lords, have over the years expressed concern about issues which whistleblowers have raised and about the manner of their treatment by the EU institutions. We do not, however, hold a central register of such expressions of concern.

The Government have responded to the issues involved in some whistleblowing cases by contributing actively to the development of the new (May 2004) European Communities Staff Regulations, which provide that an official shall not suffer any prejudicial effects from making a disclosure in accordance with the Regulations. This is a similar provision to provisions of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, which protect UK Crown employees who make disclosures in good faith.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Sugar Beet

2. **Mr. Bacon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the possible effects of changes to sugar beet quotas on British farmers. [207844]

Margaret Beckett: The European Commission's preferred approach to sugar reform would involve price and quota cuts for beet growers in all member states. We are still awaiting detailed proposals, but have in the meantime published independent economic research illustrating some of the possible effects.

Climate Change Targets

13. **Mr. Meacher:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what action she proposes to take to ensure that the UK meets all its climate change targets. [207857]

Margaret Beckett: The UK remains on course to achieve its Kyoto target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 12.5 per cent. by 2008–12. The current review of the UK Climate Change Programme aims to provide a comprehensive assessment of the progress that the Government and the devolved Administrations have made towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions since the programme was published in 2000.

Fishing Industry (Scotland)

14. **Mr. Weir:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent discussions she has had with representatives of the Scottish fishing industry. [207858]

Mr. Bradshaw: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, Ross Finnie and I met UK industry leaders in October. Mr. Finnie and I worked closely with industry representatives in the run-up to and during the recent Fisheries Council.

Waste Disposal

15. **Angela Watkinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on her Department's landfill policy. [207860]

Mr. Morley: The Government are committed to reducing the UK's reliance on landfill, in order to reduce its environmental and potential public health impact and because landfilling is a missed opportunity to recover value from waste.

16. **Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the impact of Government building targets in the south-east on her policy for waste disposal. [207862]

Mr. Morley: The Government's policy for sustainable waste management aims to break the link between economic growth and environmental degradation and resource use—in particular by pushing waste management up the waste hierarchy. The Government's housing targets for the south-east will have no direct impact on that policy.

Wildlife Conservation (West Midlands)

17. **Mr. Jim Cunningham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many wildlife conservation sites are located in the west midlands. [207863]

Mr. Bradshaw: There are 442 Sites of Special Scientific Interest in the west midlands region covering more than 26,000 hectares. Of these sites, 22 are also European sites under the Birds and Habitats Directives; 16 are National Nature Reserves and there are 92 Local Nature Reserves in the region.

Horticulture Industry

18. **Mr. Borrow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps her Department is taking to assist the horticulture industry. [207864]

Mr. Bradshaw: Defra funds a substantial research and development programme of benefit to horticulture. Growers are also eligible for assistance under the England rural development programme and many will benefit from the new single payment scheme.

Beekeeping

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what research has been commissioned by her Department on diseases affecting the economic viability of beekeeping. [207865]

Mr. Bradshaw: Since 2001, Defra has commissioned research on notifiable pests and diseases of bees worth about £760,000. Current projects include the development of biological control methods for varroa and rapid diagnostic tests for the small hive beetle. In addition, scientists at Defra's National Bee Unit have been developing the "shook swarm" treatment for European foul brood.

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will instruct the National Bee Unit to issue advice to beekeepers on the effects of formic acid, lactic acid and oxalic acid on tackling the parasite Varroa Destructor in honey bees. [207705]

Alun Michael: All veterinary medicinal products are required to be authorised by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate before they can be marketed or administered in the UK. Currently, neither oxalic acid nor formic acid may be legally administered to treat honey bees. However, certain regulatory exemptions from the requirement for authorisation allow veterinary surgeons to prescribe lactic acid to be administered in the treatment of bees.

The National Bee Unit is currently updating its advisory literature on the management of Varroa Destructor, and is liaising with the Veterinary Medicines Directorate about the guidance that may be given to beekeepers on the use of acids and other chemicals to control infestations of this mite.

Abandoned Vehicles

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if her Department will assess the merits of bringing forward legislative proposals to give local authorities the power to recover the costs of removal of abandoned vehicles from the last registered owner; and if she will make a statement. [206986]

Alun Michael: The Refuse Disposal (Amenity) Act 1978 entitles local authorities to recover from the relevant person the costs of removing and disposing of an abandoned vehicle.

In addition, the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environmental Bill will give an authorised officer of a local authority the power to issue a fixed penalty notice of £200 in respect of an offence of abandoning a vehicle. Local authorities will be able to retain the revenue from the receipts of these penalties.

The Bill will also allow local authorities greater flexibility to dispose of abandoned vehicles immediately avoiding further storage costs.

The ability of local authorities to recover costs from the last registered keeper is dependant on the accuracy of the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency's (DVLA) database. The introduction of Continuous Registration has seen significant increases in disposal notices, Statutory Off Road Notifications and vehicle licensing. The DVLA is targeted with ensuring its vehicle record is 97.5 per cent. accurate or better by July 2005.

Dairy Industry

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the balance of trade in each dairy product for which figures are available by *(a)* quantity and *(b)* value has been in each year since 1995. [207476]

Alun Michael: The following table provides details of the imports, exports and balance of trade for dairy products by quantity (thousands and tonnes) and value (£ million) for the period 1995 to 2003.

Quantity thousand tonnes

	1995	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
Liquid milk:									
Imports	178	117	154	193	138	126	93	49	38
Exports	161	47	88	160	209	160	65	69	198
Balance	−17	−70	−66	−33	71	34	−28	20	160
Butter:									
Imports	114	114	111	105	114	118	115	116	118
Exports	54	51	74	65	56	45	41	39	44
Balance	−60	−63	−37	−40	−58	−73	−74	−77	−74
Cream:									
Imports	4	5	11	11	8	10	18	15	15
Exports	79	95	92	101	96	82	85	91	114
Balance	75	90	81	90	88	72	67	76	99
Whole milk powder:									
Imports	8	10	10	10	10	11	8	9	13
Exports	76	75	106	106	92	102	86	102	117
Balance	68	65	96	96	82	91	78	93	104
Skimmed milk powder:									
Imports	14	13	13	11	14	13	23	17	32
Exports	57	20	45	34	60	112	30	29	56
Balance	43	7	32	23	46	99	7	12	24
Condensed milk:									
Imports	13	10	13	13	14	15	14	12	20
Exports	65	58	63	64	51	31	22	30	21
Balance	52	48	50	51	37	16	8	18	1

Quantity thousand tonnes

	1995	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
Cheese:									
Imports	213	239	240	257	277	255	275	285	316
Exports	56	59	53	55	62	58	68	83	90
Balance	−157	−180	−187	−202	−215	−197	−207	−202	−226
Yoghurt:									
Imports	56	54	71	82	69	132	148	142	193
Exports	4	5	6	7	3	6	9	9	10
Balance	−52	−49	−65	−75	−66	−126	−139	−133	−183
Ice cream:									
Imports	32	33	45	54	58	63	64	76	77
Exports	31	27	28	32	40	42	35	37	41
Balance	−1	−6	−17	−22	−18	−21	−29	−39	−36
Other dairy products:									
Imports	72	68	43	46	50	50	57	56	84
Exports	89	43	38	53	36	45	52	64	54
Balance	17	−25	−5	7	−14	−5	−5	8	−30
Total quantity:									
Imports	672	663	711	782	752	793	815	777	906
Exports	641	480	593	677	705	683	493	553	745
Balance	−31	−183	−118	−105	−47	−110	−322	−224	−161

Value £ million

	1995	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
Liquid milk:									
Imports	60	41	47	46	34	29	26	16	14
Exports	43	17	22	34	47	36	20	21	48
Balance	−17	−24	−25	−12	13	7	−6	5	34
Butter:									
Imports	242	232	216	211	230	235	245	254	281
Exports	142	129	144	126	105	83	80	71	75
Balance	−100	−103	−72	−85	−125	−152	−165	−183	−206
Cream:									
Imports	7	9	14	14	13	13	15	15	16
Exports	113	123	103	109	92	82	83	89	120
Balance	106	114	89	95	79	69	68	74	104
Whole milk powder:									
Imports	16	20	17	15	13	16	13	11	17
Exports	134	127	155	152	115	123	117	106	147
Balance	118	107	138	137	102	107	104	95	130
Skimmed milk powder:									
Imports	23	23	21	18	25	22	26	20	28
Exports	100	34	56	41	53	64	31	34	65
Balance	77	11	35	23	28	42	5	14	37
Condensed milk:									
Imports	18	11	12	12	12	16	16	11	18
Exports	42	39	42	41	32	22	16	17	15
Balance	24	28	30	29	20	6	1	6	−3
Cheese:									
Imports	553	621	590	611	630	601	655	647	744
Exports	144	153	122	126	137	130	148	153	180
Balance	−409	−468	−468	−485	−493	−471	−507	−494	−564
Yoghurt:									
Imports	57	59	63	61	56	68	75	103	138
Exports	6	6	8	8	5	6	12	13	15
Balance	−51	−53	−55	−53	−51	−62	−63	−90	−123

Value £ million

	1995	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
Ice cream:									
Imports	70	65	80	90	102	106	112	129	130
Exports	45	49	47	49	55	58	46	52	48
Balance	−25	−16	−33	−41	−47	−48	−66	−77	−82
Other dairy products:									
Imports	103	48	67	79	88	88	112	130	150
Exports	72	27	21	26	24	30	36	32	18
Balance	−31	−21	−46	−53	−64	−58	−76	−98	−132
Total value:									
Imports	1,079	1,113	1,094	1,116	1,156	1,146	1,228	1,259	1,454
Exports	796	704	720	712	665	634	589	588	731
Balance	−283	−409	−374	−404	−491	−512	−639	−671	−723

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many *(a)* dairy farms and *(b)* milk cows there have been in England in each year since 1995. [207533]

Alun Michael: The table shows the number of holdings in England whose predominant business is dairy and total dairy cows, including animals on holdings where dairy is not the predominant activity.

	Number of Dairy Type Holdings	*Dairy Cows*
1995	19,632	1,809,282
1996	18,904	1,783,327
1997	18,007	1,700,250
1998	17,014	1,642,636
1999	16,313	1,659,210
2000	15,219	1,575,320
2001	14,106	1,490,226
2002	14,342	1,462,155
2003	13,556	1,434,727

Note:

(a) Figures prior to 2000 are for main holdings only; 2000 onwards include main and minor holdings.

(b) Predominant dairy holdings are those whose main income is derived from dairy.

Source:

June Agricultural Census

Mr. Leigh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what proportion of the UK's dairy industry is reliant upon imports. [207861]

Alun Michael: The UK is almost entirely self-sufficient in raw milk. None of the UK's processing companies are reliant on imported milk. Imports tend to be of finished products like butter and cheese.

Disabilities

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many of the staff employed by her Department have a declared disability. [205553]

Alun Michael: The Cabinet Office collects and publishes annually statistical information on the civil service by Department. These include data on the number of staff who have a declared disability.

The latest available information at April 2004 is available in the Library and on the civil service website at: http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management information/statisticalinformation/statistics/publications/xls/disability apr04 4nov04.xls

Exercise Hornbeam

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the effectiveness of Exercise Hornbeam on foot and mouth control measures; and what plans she has to respond to the Royal Society's update report on those measures. [208266]

Mr. Bradshaw: Exercise Hornbeam confirmed that the Government's contingency plan for another foot and mouth disease outbreak is robust and that considerable progress has been made in emergency preparedness since 2001. The contingency plan ensures that the Government will be able to mount a more rapid, efficient and co-ordinated response to an outbreak by working closely with operational partners such as local authorities and the police.

All exercises identify issues that need clarifying and addressing and Exercise Hornbeam was no exception. The Government are not complacent and the exercise has helped to identify the areas where we need to focus efforts further to improve procedures and to fine tune policies and strategies for all stages of an outbreak.

Defra will be providing a detailed response to the Royal Society Infectious Diseases in Livestock Follow-Up Review later this month.

Fisheries

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will *(a)* urge the European Commission to reduce catches permitted to EU fleets fishing in African national waters to levels which do not undermine sustainable fishing for the local fishermen and *(b)* request an independent study of the effect of EU fishing on the local fishermen, catches, employment and diet in the states which are leased for fishing rights by the EU. [207807]

Mr. Bradshaw: The UK consistently argues that fishing opportunities granted to the community fleet in the waters of third countries be set at sustainable levels and are coherent with development policy.

The council conclusions on third country partnership agreements, adopted in July 2004, require the status of fish stocks to be assessed before fisheries agreements are concluded or renewed. They also specify that the coastal state's priorities be taken into account as part of this assessment, in the context of development co-operation and scientific and technical co-operation.

Imported Meat

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the risks of importing disease via illegally imported meat. [205980]

Mr. Bradshaw: Illegally imported meat has not been subject to the normal food safety checks associated with legally imported meat. Thus there is a risk that it may contain human pathogens, including pathogens not normally found in the UK. On 19 July, Defra published the updated report on the risk assessment undertaken by the Veterinary Laboratories Agency (VLA) (the original was published on 6 March 2003). Copies of both reports have been placed in House Libraries.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether seized meat imports are tested for disease. [205983]

Mr. Bradshaw: No. Illegal imports of meat are normally destroyed without undue delay, though if the seizure was made solely because the importer failed to comply with the pre-notification requirements of Products of Animal Origin Regulations 2004, Customs may agree, after consultation with Port Health Authorities, to the product being re-exported.

The Government have considered the feasibility of testing samples taken from seized illegally imported products of animal origin for a range of animal diseases. It concluded that the endemic nature of these diseases in many countries around the world results in a low but continuous risk of infected meat reaching the country through illegal routes. This means that all such seizures are treated as a potential animal and human health risk and destroyed, as soon as possible, by incineration. The risk of disease relates to the possibility that infectious material in illegal imports may be consumed by animals. Very small amounts of infectious material may cause disease and are likely to be only a small proportion of any illegal imports. There is thus very little chance of finding infected material by testing samples. Similar considerations apply with regard to the testing of samples for human pathogens.

Invoice Payments

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the average length of time was between the date of invoices issued to her Department from a supplier and payment by the Department of the invoice in the last 12 months for which figures are available; what percentage of these invoices were paid within 30 days of the date of issue of the invoice; what percentage of these invoices remained unpaid after 90 days; and if she will make a statement on the Department's policy on the payment of invoices issued to it. [200619]

Alun Michael: Defra's standard contractual payment terms are for goods and services payments to be made within 30 days of receipt of either goods or services, or a valid invoice, whichever is the later.

For the period 01 April 2003—31 March 2004 the total number of payments made was 104,185. Of this the number of payments paid by the due date was 97,164. The percentage of those invoices paid within 30 days of receipt of a valid invoice was 93.26 per cent. The percentage of those invoices that remained unpaid after 90 days is 0.69 per cent.

Parliamentary Questions

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what target her Department sets for the maximum acceptable time to respond in full to a parliamentary question; and what percentage of answers given by her Department failed to meet this target in each parliamentary Session from 1997–98 to 2003–04. [202562]

Alun Michael: Defra was created in June 2001 and inherited a poor performance culture in terms of responses to both parliamentary questions and correspondence.

In the parliamentary Session 2003–04, we answered 67.7 per cent. of our ordinary written PQs within five working days, and answered 17.2 per cent. of named day PQs on time. Records for earlier parliamentary Sessions were not maintained in such a way to enable the Department to extract the information requested without incurring disproportionate costs.

We aim to give Members a substantive response to any named day question on the named day and to answer ordinary written questions within a working week of them being tabled. This is not always possible, but Ministers are keen to hold the Department to these levels of performance in general.

Right to Roam

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many successful appeals there have been against the preliminary mapping of areas for access under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000; and if she will make a statement. [207853]

Alun Michael: The Planning Inspectorate in England had issued 2,442 mapping appeal decisions as of 11 January 2005. The appellant was successful either in full or in part in 1,765 of these appeals.

Scrapie

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on latest research on scrapie and possible links to BSE in sheep. [205499]

Mr. Bradshaw: Research in recent years has shown that most PrP genotypes of sheep can be experimentally infected with BSE when they are directly challenged in the brain. The results from experimental challenges of similar sheep with large doses of BSE orally indicate that the PrP genotypes that show resistance to scrapie are also resistant to BSE.

Scrapie surveillance using EU recommended tests in UK slaughter sheep and fallen stock have not shown evidence of BSE. These tests have identified forms of scrapie that were not previously recognised in a small number of sheep. Further work is being done on these newly identified forms, and the evidence to date indicates that they do not have the same signature as BSE.

Single Farm Payments

Mr. Rendel: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment her Department has made of the effect of proposals for single farm payments on future land use. [207866]

Alun Michael: The Department has published an assessment of the economic impact in England of the single payment scheme. In addition, the Environment Agency has published projections of land use to 2015.

Sustainable Energy

Mrs. Calton: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent discussions she has had with the Department for Transport on promoting sustainable energy sources. [207851]

Mr. Morley: The Department has had a number of discussions recently with the Department for Transport, both at Ministerial and official level, about promoting sustainable energy sources and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Currently, discussions are taking place about the feasibility of a renewable transport fuel obligation.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Hyponatraemia-related Deaths

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland which individuals have been appointed to the Hyponatraemia-related Deaths Inquiry Team; who appointed each one; what the employment is of each; and what the immediate past posts of each member were. [205964]

Angela Smith: I appointed John O'Hara QC as Chairman of the Inquiry into Hyponatraemia-related Deaths. The subsequent appointment of staff and their particular roles are matters for Mr. O'Hara.

As is normal practice, to assist him with the administration of the inquiry, the Department offered a number of civil servants to undertake administrative and clerical duties. Previously the secretary and deputy secretary to the inquiry were employed respectively as the manager of the office of the permanent secretary and the departmental private secretary to the Minister. Of the remainder, one came from the occupational health service; one from the Northern Ireland Assembly; one from the departmental typing pool; and one has returned from a career break. It is understood that Mr. O'Hara is also engaging a barrister, a solicitor and some professional experts in the fields of paediatrics, paediatric anaesthetics, nursing and healthcare management.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the explanation of the Chief Medical Officer of Northern Ireland to the parents of Lucy Crawford regarding their daughter's death. [205958]

Angela Smith: It would be inappropriate for me to comment on any matter relating to the death of Lucy Crawford. John O'Hara QC, as Chairman of the Inquiry into Hyponatraemia-related deaths, has been tasked to examine and report on all matters he considers relevant to the death of Lucy Crawford and also of Raychel Ferguson and Adam Strain.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much has been spent by his Department on *(a)* indoor bought plants, *(b)* indoor hired plants, *(c)* outdoor bought plants and *(d)* outdoor hired plants in each year since 1997. [205595]

Mr. Pearson: There was no expenditure by the Northern Ireland Office on the purchase or hire of plants prior to 2001.

In 2001 the Department assumed responsibility for the maintenance of the grounds at Hillsborough Castle.

The total amount spent by the Northern Ireland Office on the purchase and hire of indoor and outdoor plants for each calendar since 2001 is detailed.

	£
2001	6,246.23
2002	13,704.00
2003	4,376.62

It was not possible to extract from our records which plants were intended for indoor use and which for outdoor. Nor was it possible to separate expenditure between buying or hiring plants.

This answer relates only to the Northern Ireland Office and does not include information in respect of the eleven departments of the Northern Ireland Administration.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much the Department spent on first class travel in each year since 1997. [206558]

Mr. Pearson: The total amount the Northern Ireland Office has spent on first class travel in each year since 1997 is listed in the table.

	£
1997–98	6,404.00
1989–99	11,423.50
1999–2000	29,978.40
2000–01	16,115.10
2001–02	16,879.20
2002–03	0.00
2003–04	60,614.40

This answer relates to the Northern Ireland Office and does not include information in respect of the eleven departments of the Northern Ireland Administration.

Disabled Children

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on inspection of services for disabled children in the community. [205955]

Angela Smith: The inspection of services for disabled children in hospital has been completed and the overview report is due to be published in early March 2005. This will be followed by a dissemination period to allow time for Boards and Trusts to implement the recommendations of the report.

The inspection of services for disabled children in the community has been deferred.

Forestry

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what progress has been made towards a forestry strategy for Northern Ireland. [208323]

Mr. Pearson: In December 2004 the Forest Service published a consultation paper "Options for Forestry". This paper contains proposals formulated as a result of an earlier round of consultation, a full economic appraisal and several public surveys. The consultation period closes on 31 March this year.

Primary Schools

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the reasons for differences in figures for post-primary school enrolments between those issued in a recent statistical press release from the Department for Education in Northern Ireland and those predicted by the Post Primary Review Working Party Report; if he will publish the figures for post-primary school enrolments issued from these sources for each year from 2002–03 to 2004–05; and if he will make a statement. [207735]

Mr. Gardiner: The number of children entering post primary education in Northern Ireland continues to fall in line with the falling numbers in primary schools. Neither the base line nor the projected figures for post primary enrolment used in the Costello report included those pupils enrolled in special education units attached to mainstream schools. When these pupils are factored in, the difference between projected and actual school population figures amounts to 0.6 per cent. or 966 pupils for the current school year.

This difference is due to an increase in the number of young people staying on in the sixth form, where 26,321 were enrolled in 2004–05 against the 25,332 projected. As such, this may indicate the success of Government policies such as the education maintenance allowance to encourage young people to stay in school beyond the compulsory school age.

The numbers of pupils enrolled in post-primary schools in the period 2002–03 to 2004–05 (actual and projected) are as follows:

	2002–03	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Actual enrolments published in statistical press releases	155,747	155,394	153,455
Of which:			
Special units	839	870	860
Excluding special units	154,908	154,524	152,595
Projected enrolments published in Costello Report	154,908	154,094	151,629

This decline in post-primary numbers is expected to continue as the declining primary school population transfers into post-primary schools:

Year 1 to year 7 enrolments
(primary schools and prep. departments)

	Number
1996–97	184,638
1997–98	182,261
1998–99	179,033
1999–2000	175,602
2000–01	172,491
2001–02	170,553
2002–03	167,799
2003–04	165,347
2004–05	163,186

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he intends to require provision for a *(a)* school library room, *(b)* computer room and *(c)* special needs room to be included in the Primary School Building Handbook. [207974]

Mr. Gardiner: The Department hopes to publish revisions to the Handbooks for Nursery and Primary Schools in 2005 and consideration of provision for school libraries, computer and special needs rooms will be taken into account as part of the review process.

Provisional IRA (Army Council)

David Burnside: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether members of the Army Council of the Provisional IRA have immunity from investigation by the *(a)* Police Service of Northern Ireland and *(b)* Assets Recovery Agency. [205452]

Mr. Pearson: No.

Psychiatric Wards (Young People)

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* admissions and *(b)* bed days resulting from admissions of young people under the age of 18 years who were admitted to adult psychiatry wards there have been in the Province in each of the last five years. [206179]

Angela Smith: The number of *(a)* admissions and *(b)* bed days resulting from those admissions of young people under the age of 18 years who were admitted to adult psychiatric wards in the Province in each of the last five years is detailed in the following table.

	(a) Admissions	*(b) Number of bed days*
2003–04	173	5,062
2002–03	194	5,401
2001–02	183	6,346

	(a) Admissions	*(b) Number of bed days*
2000–01	198	6,551
1999–2000	196	7,522

Notes:

1. Figures relate to financial years except for one trust who provided figures for calendar years and for 2004 to 30 November.

2. If a patient was admitted in one year and their episode carried into the next year the number of bed days are attributed to the year in which the admission took place and the admission is only counted once in the year it occurred.

3. If a patient is admitted when aged less than 18 years and the patient turns 18 years of age during their episode, bed days after the patient turns 18 years of age are included in total length of stay.

4. Where possible the number of bed days was calculated excluding days on leave, but one trust was unable to exclude days on leave from its figures.

5. Figures include patients admitted to psychiatric wards in Muckamore Abbey hospital, which normally caters for learning-disabled patients.

Source:

HSS trusts

Radon Gas

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the health dangers in the Province from radon gas. [205965]

Angela Smith: The Environment and Heritage Service published a report in May 1999 showing the levels of radon gas in private dwellings throughout Northern Ireland. The report, based on some 16,000 measurements in private dwellings, includes maps showing the percentage of houses likely to exceed the action level throughout Northern Ireland.

At high concentrations, radon leads to an increased risk of lung cancer and it is estimated that radon could account for about 60 of the 800 or so lung cancer deaths per year in Northern Ireland. The average level of radon in private dwellings in Northern Ireland is similar to the rest of the UK although there are areas in the west and south-east of the Province where radon risk is elevated and it is estimated that 4,000 homes in Northern Ireland are likely to exceed the action level.

The Environment and Heritage Service has already offered free tests to all householders living in the high-risk areas. The radon risk map and radon leaflets can be accessed on the Environment and Heritage Service's website, www.ehsni.gov.uk.

Rural Development Council

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) what *(a)* criteria and *(b)* procedures are used by the Rural Development Council to assess an application for grant; [204333]

(2) what grants have been received from the Rural Development Council in each Northern Ireland constituency since it's formation; and for what projects; [204334]

(3) how many applications for grants were received by the Rural Development Council in each of the last three years; [204335]

(4) what the average length of time taken by the Rural Development Council to respond to a grant application was in the last 12 months; [204336]

(5) what projects have been supported by the Rural Development Council aimed at *(a)* supporting farmers or farm families and *(b)* promoting alternative skills training in East Antrim in (i) Newtownabbey, (ii) Carrickfergus and (iii) Larne borough council areas in each of the last three years; and how much grant was awarded in each case. [204337]

Mr. Pearson: I have asked the Chief Executive of the Rural Development Council to write to the hon. Gentleman on these matters.

Letter from Martin McDonald to Ald. Roy Beggs, dated 20 December 2004:

The Department of Agriculture & Rural Development (DARD) has forwarded the Rural Development Council a number of Parliamentary Questions, which you have recently tabled. I wish to respond to each of the questions as follows:

Mr Roy Beggs (East Antrim): To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what (a) criteria and (b) procedures are used by the Rural Development Council to assess an application for grant.

As you are aware the RDC operates an open and competitive application process, where applications are assessed against a scoring framework considering the applicant, area and project.

Upon receipt, the application is scored against eligibility criteria. Where an application has been deemed eligible it will be assessed against a scoring framework to identify those projects most appropriate for receipt of funding. (A full copy of the procedure and criteria are enclosed for your information).

Mr Roy Beggs (East Antrim): To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what grants have been received from the Rural Development Council in each Northern Ireland constituency since the formation of the RDC: and for what projects. 204334

The following table presents approved applications under the current EU Strategy Period 2001–2006:

	Number
North Antrim	18
Newry and Mourne	25
South Down	8
Strangford	4
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	63
Foyle	14
Mid Ulster	35
East Londonderry	7
West Tyrone	25
Upper Bann	4
Lagan Valley	3
East Antrim	1
South Antrim	2
Belfast North	2
Belfast South	1

Mr Roy Beggs (East Antrim): To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, how many applications for grants were received by the Rural Development Council in each of the last three years. 204335

The following table presents total applications received by RDC in the last 3 years:

	Number
2001	3
2002	379
2003	82
2004	186

Mr Roy Beggs (East Antrim): To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what the average length of time taken by the Rural Development Council to respond to a grant application was in the last 12 months. 204336

The RDC invited and assessed applications under two specific Measures during 2004.

The following provides a time-line against the measures:

BSP Measure 4.10

	Date
Receipt of Applications	31 March 2004
Assessment Panel	23 September 2004
Letters to Applicants	5 October 2004

BSP Measure 4.9

	Date
Receipt of Applications	31 March 2004
Assessment Panel	17 November 2004
Letters to Applicants	24 November 2004

The average time taken to get through the assessment process was around 8 months in 2004. During this period 71 applications were received with 20 approved and 51 refused. £6,810,630.00 funds were bid for against an available budget of £1,980,000. The assessment procedures applied by RDC (attached to this response) are designed to facilitate a rigorous scrutiny of applications from community and voluntary sector applicants.

The process may or may not involve external economic appraisal by independent consultants as well as initial eligibility testing, needs assessment, options appraisal, budget challenge and advice from key local informants. For many applicants there is also a need to identify matching funds before a decision can be given. Some applications do of course reach a conclusion more quickly than others but given the competitive nature of the process all applications are considered at the same time at a meeting of the RDC assessment Panel.

Mr Roy Beggs (East Antrim): To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what projects have been supported by the Rural Development Council aimed at supporting farmers or farm families and promoting alternative skills training in East Antrim in (a) Newtownabbey, (b) Carrickfergus and (c) Larne borough council areas in each of the last three years; and how much grant was awarded in each case. 204337

The RDC has not funded any projects in the East Antrim, Newtownabbey or Carrickfergus areas aimed at supporting farmers or farm families and promoting alternative skills training.

Should you require clarification to any of the above please do not hesitate to get in contact.

Student Statistics

Alan Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many full-time education students were at universities and colleges in Northern Ireland in each of the last 10 years. [206050]

Mr. Gardiner: The number of full-time enrolments at universities and colleges in Northern Ireland in each of the last 10 years is as follows:

Full-time enrolments at higher and further education institutions in Northern Ireland: 1993–94 to 2003–04

Sector	HE institutions	FE institutions	Total
1993–94	24,075	23,125	47,200
1994–95	24,873	23,675	48,548
1995–96	26,017	23,934	49,951
1996–97	26,089	25,033	51,122
1997–98	28,535	24,968	53,503
1998–99	28,316	23,854	52,170
1999–2000	28,282	24,128	52,410
2000–01	30,666	24,542	55,208
2001–02	31,642	25,163	56,805
2002–03	33,989	24,826	58,815

Source:
Compendium of NI Education Statistics.
Weblink: http://www.deni.gov.uk/facts_figures/documents/Compendium_04.pdf

Taskforces

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much was spent by his Department in each year since 1997 on taskforces and similar bodies. [204882]

Mr. Paul Murphy: Detailed in the table is how much the Northern Ireland Office spent on some of the major taskforces and similar bodies for which we can provide the information requested in each year since 1997.

£

	1997–98	1998–99	1999–2000	2000–01
Organised Crime Task force (NI)	110,165	196,354	244,753	178,677
Independent Commission on Policing for NI (Patten)	—	—	102,776	536,549
Review of Parades Commission	47,068	29,481	126,740	5,494
Review of Criminal Injuries Compensation in NI	—	30,706	196,912	79,045
NI Victims Commission	12,249	633,483	—	—
Alternative to the Baton Round Steering Group	—	—	—	—
Review of NI Drugs Strategy	—	51,944	13,646	—
Criminal Justice Review	—	390,259	761,096	496,780
Total	169,482	1,332,227	1,445,923	1,296,545

£

	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05[1]
Organised Crime Task force (NI)	460,451	302,161	363,822	136,326
Independent Commission on Policing for NI (Patten)	521,044	605,611	618,160	388,619
Review of Parades Commission	49,111	125,896	8,482	973
Review of Criminal Injuries Compensation in NI	86,234	27,160	—	—
NI Victims Commission	—	—	—	—
Alternative to the Baton Round Steering Group	—	801,873	806,367	157,342
Review of NI Drugs Strategy	—	—	—	—
Criminal Justice Review	—	—	—	—
Total	1,116,840	1,862,701	1,796,831	683,260

[1] Up to December 2004.

Following is a list of other taskforce groups and similar bodies for which the figures are not easily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Diplock Review Group

Vulnerable/Intimidated Witness (NI) Working Group

Sex Offenders Working Group

Restorative Justice Steering Group

Review of Probation Officer Qualification Route

Review of Pre Sentence Reports

After Care Working Group

Strategic Working Group Juvenile Justice

Forensic Science Steering Group.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on how many occasions between 31 March 2002 and 31 March 2003 his special advisers travelled abroad in an official capacity; what places were visited; and how much each visit cost. [207182]

Mr. Pearson: During the period 31 March 2002 and 31 March 2003 Northern Ireland Office special advisers travelled abroad on two occasions. One trip was to Dublin costing £203.50 and the other to the United States of America, costing a total of £4,560.80.

The expenditure referred to does not include the cost of hotel accommodation and other associated expenses as it is not possible to isolate those figures which relate solely to special advisers from other costs.

Stolen Property

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the property belonging to his Department that has *(a)* been stolen and *(b)* been reported lost in each year since 1997, broken down by type of article. [206369]

Mr. Paul Murphy: There has only been one item of property belonging to the Northern Ireland Office that has been stolen since 1997. In the 2002–03 financial year a handheld PC, valued at £350, was stolen from the luggage hold of a plane during a flight from London to Belfast.

Written Answers to Questions

Monday 17 January 2005

ELECTORAL COMMISSION

Postal Voting

26. **Bob Spink:** To ask the hon. Member for Gosport, representing the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission what recent assessment the commission has made of the security of postal voting. [208475]

Mr. Viggers: The Commission's most recent assessment of the security of postal voting was published in its report on postal voting—Delivering democracy—in August 2004. The Government published their response to the recommendations in that report in December 2004 in Cm 6436.

ADVOCATE-GENERAL

Invoice Payments

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Advocate-General what the average length of time was between the date of invoices issued to her Department from a supplier and payment by the Department of the invoice in the last 12 months for which figures are available; what percentage of those invoices were paid within 30 days of the date of issue of the invoice; what percentage of those invoices remained unpaid after 90 days; and if she will make a statement on the Department's policy on the payment of invoices issued to the Department. [201007]

The Advocate-General: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given today by my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Scotland. The information for the Office of the Advocate-General is not held separately from that of the Scotland Office.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

European Court of Justice

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Solicitor-General what the cost was of UK participation in the Commission case against the Hellenic Republic in Court of Justice Cases C-475/01 as detailed in OJ C300 volume 47 of 4 December; and what form such participation took. [207258]

The Solicitor-General: The UK's participation in Case C-475/01 was limited to applying to the European Court of Justice for leave to intervene, which was granted. After reviewing the pleadings, the UK decided not to pursue the intervention because it had nothing to add to the Commission's case. The UK did not therefore submit a statement of intervention or attend the hearing.

In accordance with the Court's Rules of Procedure (Article 69(4)), an intervening member state bears its own costs of intervention. Aside from the time spent by departmental officials in considering the pleadings and applying for leave to intervene, the only costs incurred were the costs of translating the pleadings from Greek to English, which were approximately £2,150.

CPS Direct

Vera Baird: To ask the Solicitor-General in how many Crown Prosecution Service areas Crown Prosecution Service Direct is fully operational. [207494]

The Solicitor-General: There are currently 14 Local Criminal Justice Board Areas who have become subject to the statutory charging scheme and are therefore delivering out of hours legal advice and charging decisions to the police through CPS Direct. These are:

West Yorkshire and Kent from 17 May 2004;

South Yorkshire from 24 May 2004;

Cleveland from 4 June 2004;

Lancashire from 15 June 2004;

Northumbria from 28 June 2004;

Avon and Somerset, and Nottinghamshire from 5 July 2004;

Humberside from 31 August 2004;

Greater Manchester from 6 September 2004;

Thames Valley from 14 September 2004;

Merseyside from 4 October 2004;

London from 1 November 2004; and

West Midlands from 9 November 2004.

Vera Baird: To ask the Solicitor-General what her assessment is of the impact of Crown Prosecution Service Direct on *(a)* the level of convictions, *(b)* the numbers of guilty pleas and *(c)* the numbers of cracked trials in 2004. [207495]

The Solicitor-General: CPS Direct is currently operating in the 14 Criminal Justice Areas that have implemented statutory charging.

The following table records the conviction and guilty plea rate of cases finalised in November 2004 that have been subject to statutory charging arrangements ("All") and those that have involved CPS Direct prosecutors ("CPS Direct").

Percentage

	Guilty plea rate		*Conviction rate*	
	Magistrates	*Crown*	*Magistrates*	*Crown*
All	69.1	65.3	76.7	76.9
CPS Direct	73.1	77.7	79.0	84.8

The data available on cracked trials does not distinguish between all cases and those receiving advice through CPS Direct.

Crown Prosecution Service

Mr. Amess: To ask the Solicitor General what criteria the Crown Prosecution Service uses to decide whether to prosecute in a case referred to it. [206932]

The Solicitor-General: All cases received by the Crown Prosecution Service are individually reviewed against the tests set out in the Code for Crown Prosecutors. The Code is a publicly available document issued by the Director of Public Prosecutions to give guidance on general principles to be applied in determining whether cases should be prosecuted and the choice of charge.

A prosecutor must first decide whether there is enough evidence to provide a realistic prospect of conviction against each defendant on each charge. If there is sufficient evidence the prosecutor will consider whether the public interest requires the case to be prosecuted. A prosecution will usually take place unless there are public interest factors tending against a prosecution which clearly outweigh those tending in favour, or it appears more appropriate in all the circumstances of the case to divert the person from prosecution.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Solicitor-General what documents the Crown Prosecution Service requires to receive before making a decision to prosecute. [206933]

The Solicitor-General: Under the new early advice and charging arrangements, the police may seek the opinion of a Crown Prosecution Service duty prosecutor at any stage in the proceedings. No formal documentation is required for the early stages of an investigation, though the police are encouraged to provide copies of any documentation they have. For the formal decision to commence proceedings, usually by the preferment of a charge, the police are required to provide jointly agreed documentation set out in a Manual of Guidance and in Guidance issued by the Director of Public Prosecutions for prosecutors making charging decisions.

The documents which accompany a police officer's report will include key witness statements and other relevant material such as video recordings, an account of the defendant's interview, a record of the defendant's previous convictions, if any, and any material that would undermine the prosecution's case or assist the defence.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Solicitor-General if she will make a statement on the pilot scheme for joint working between the Crown Prosecution Service and the police in Southend. [207631]

The Solicitor-General: The joint Crown Prosecution Service/police criminal justice unit was opened in Southend Police Station in November 2000. Charging Prosecutors at the Station now provide advice to the police both pre-charge and at the charging stage. When required they also provide advice to police officers during their investigation into allegations of crime.

The police and CPS also work together on effective trial management and supporting witnesses to give their evidence through No Witness No Justice.

Sex Abuse (Evidential Tests)

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Solicitor General how the Crown Prosecution Service tests the evidence in historical sex abuse cases. [207507]

The Solicitor-General: In all cases it prosecutes, the Crown Prosecution Service applies the evidential test set out in the Code for Crown Prosecutors and only those cases that pass this test and where it is in the public interest to prosecute, are put before the court. A new edition of the Code was issued in November 2004, and is publicly available.

The Attorney General announced, in a written statement to Parliament on 20 December 2004, a proposal that will enable prosecutors to interview and assess the evidence and credibility of a witness before trial. This will include sensitive cases, such as those involving historical sexual abuse.

Sir Roy Meadows

Mr. Cash: To ask the Solicitor-General what payment was made to Sir Roy Meadows as an expert witness in the case of R. *v.* Cannings; by whom; and on whose behalf. [208524]

The Solicitor-General: The payment made by the Crown Prosecution Service to Sir Roy Meadow for his attendance at court and attendance at conferences was £3,462.15. Wiltshire Constabulary made payments to Sir Roy Meadows in relation to preparation work totalling £4,730.

Taskforces

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Solicitor-General how much was spent by her Department in each year since 1997 on taskforces and similar bodies. [204881]

The Solicitor-General: Neither the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), nor the Serious Fraud Office have spent any money on taskforces or similar bodies since 1997. In 1999 the Legal Secretariat to the Law Officers spent a total of £210,000 on a review which led to the establishment of a separate and independent Inspectorate for the CPS.

Working Time Regulations

Mr. Brady: To ask the Solicitor-General how many officials working in ministerial private offices in the Department have worked more than a 48-hour week at any time in the last 12 months for which figures are available; how many of those had signed a waiver under working time regulations; and what percentage these figures represented of the total in each case. [204138]

The Solicitor-General: The working time regulations provide workers with the protection of a limit of an average of 48 hours a week working time. This is not an absolute cap of 48 hours in any one week. This average is normally calculated over a 17-week reference period, although this can be longer in certain situations (26 weeks) and can be extended by agreement (up to 52 weeks). Workers may choose to work more than 48 hours per week over this reference period by signing an opt-out agreement, but employers cannot force a worker to sign an opt-out, and workers cannot be subjected to detriment for refusing to sign an opt-out. In the last 12 months four officials working in the combined Private Office for the Law Officers have worked more than a 48 hour week on occasions. This represents 100 per cent. of the total number of permanent staff in the office.

None of these staff have signed a waiver under the working time regulations, but are now being invited to consider doing so. The working hours of Private Office staff are kept under regular review.

CHURCH COMMISSIONERS

General Synod

27. **Mr. Key:** To ask the hon. Member for Middlesbrough, representing the Church Commissioners if he will arrange for the publication of *(a)* the attendance records and *(b)* the voting records of members of all three houses of the General Synod since the last elections. [208476]

Sir Stuart Bell: Where votes are counted on particular questions the relevant figures are published in the Synod's Report of Proceedings (which is included on the Church of England website). Records of individual attendance and voting are not kept.

Lottery Funding

28. **Mr. Luff:** To ask the hon. Member for Middlesbrough, representing the Church Commissioners what discussions the Commissioners have had with the Heritage Lottery Fund about funding for cathedral and church restoration projects. [208477]

Sir Stuart Bell: The Church Heritage Forum is arranging such discussions, to include the Association of English Cathedrals, aimed at enabling better mutual understanding of priorities, potential and needs. The Heritage Lottery Fund needs continuing Government support to carry on its very welcome help with new works and repairs in places of worship.

Church Attendance and Income

29. **Miss McIntosh:** To ask the hon. Member for Middlesbrough, representing the Church Commissioners if he will make a statement on *(a)* church attendance and *(b)* church income in rural areas. [208478]

Sir Stuart Bell: In 2003 adult attendance grew in half the dioceses, but this is not specific to particular parts of the country. Church income depends chiefly on the giving levels of members and visitors and these levels vary. Predominantly rural dioceses are equally spread across the range.

Freedom of Information

John Mann: To ask the hon. Member for Middlesbrough, representing the Church Commissioners what categories of information are available under Freedom of Information legislation that have not been provided in written parliamentary answers on behalf of the Church Commissioners in the last three years. [207834]

Sir Stuart Bell: The Church Commissioners do not fall within the Freedom of Information Act.

TRANSPORT

A3

Virginia Bottomley: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if the hon. Member for Plymouth, Devonport will respond to the points raised by the right hon. Member for South-West Surrey in the Christmas Adjournment Debate on 21 December, *Official Report*, columns 2090–92, concerning the A3 at Hindhead. [208787]

Mr. Jamieson: I wrote to the right hon. Lady on 13 January addressing these points.

Blackwall Tunnel

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what the original projected cost was of the refurbishment of the Blackwall Tunnel; [208018]

(2) what the start date was of the refurbishment process for the Blackwall Tunnel; [208019]

(3) when he expects the refurbishment of the Blackwall Tunnel to be completed; [208020]

(4) what the original estimate was for the time to be taken refurbishing the Blackwall Tunnel; [208021]

(5) how many *(a)* contractors and *(b)* sub-contractors are involved in the refurbishment of the Blackwall Tunnel; [208022]

(6) what the estimated cost is of the refurbishment of the Blackwall Tunnel; [208023]

(7) for how many hours per *(a)* week, *(b)* month and *(c)* year on average the Blackwall Tunnel was (i) closed and (ii) partially closed over the last five years; [208025]

(8) what estimate his Department made of the cost to the UK economy of the *(a)* closure and *(b)* partial closure of the Blackwall Tunnel; [208026]

(9) what environmental impact study has been carried out on the effects of the *(a)* closure and *(b)* partial closure of the Blackwall Tunnel; [208027]

(10) what steps his Department is taking to provide alternative routes for traffic that is unable to use the Blackwall Tunnel. [208028]

Mr. Jamieson: The Blackwall Tunnel forms part of the Greater London Authority Road Network—now known as the Transport for London Road Network—and is the responsibility of the Mayor and Transport for London. Therefore, any works, including refurbishment, on that stretch of road are a matter for them. Information about the Blackwall Tunnel and its refurbishment can be obtained from:

Keith Ollier
Director of Street Management
Transport for London
Windsor House
42–50 Victoria Street
London SW1H OTL

Blue Badge Scheme

Janet Anderson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport on what date he expects eligibility for the Blue Badge Scheme to be extended to children under two. [209206]

Charlotte Atkins: We are currently finalising a package of changes to the Blue Badge Scheme which require changes through secondary legislation. This includes extending the scheme to those children under two whose medical needs require the transport of medical equipment at all times. We will be consulting on draft regulations in the next few months and intend to implement the changes as soon as possible thereafter.

Congestion and Parking Charges

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport which local authorities in England are liaising with his Department over the potential introduction of *(a)* congestion charging and *(b)* workplace parking charging. [207958]

Charlotte Atkins: In our recently published Guidance on Local Transport Plans, we invited local authorities to consider the scope for tackling congestion through innovative schemes involving improvements to the delivery of public transport and demand management measures such as congestion charging. Funding from the Transport Innovation Fund may be available from 2008–09 onwards to support the implementation of the best schemes. We have asked interested authorities to register their interest by the end of this month, and have responded to requests for clarification from a number of authorities in recent weeks.

Separately, the Department has been liaising with Nottingham city council about its plans to introduce a workplace parking levy.

Correspondence

Virginia Bottomley: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what instructions he issues to Ministers in his Department on protocols for correspondence with hon. Members. [208218]

Charlotte Atkins: Correspondence with hon. Members is normally dealt with by the Minister in the Department with main responsibility for the subject of the correspondence. Ministers have a target of replying to letters received from hon. Members within 15 workings days of their receipt.

The Minister responsible for a particular departmental initiative or decision will notify hon. Members whose constituencies are affected. A Minister will also notify an hon. Member when they are undertaking a departmental engagement in their constituency.

Virginia Bottomley: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when the hon. Member for Plymouth, Devonport will reply to the letter from the right hon. Member for South-West Surrey of 10 December. [208786]

Mr. Jamieson: I replied to the letter received on 16 December 2004 from the right hon. Member for South-West Surrey on 13 January 2005.

Cycling (Rail Travel)

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether future rail franchises will require franchisees to make a specific commitment to integrate cycling with rail travel. [208523]

Charlotte Atkins: Current franchise agreements require train operators to consider the needs of cyclists. The Strategic Rail Authority published its Cycling Policy in November 2004 which, among other things, covers the carriage of bikes on trains and their storage at stations. The Cycling Policy document is in the Library of the House. With the implementation of the proposals in the White Paper, "The Future of Rail", the Department for Transport would expect to continue to work with franchise operators to facilitate the integration of cycling with rail travel.

Dartford Crossings

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many times in each year since 1997 the *(a)* Dartford Tunnel and *(b)* Queen Elizabeth II Bridge, Dartford have been closed; how many closures were due to (i) road traffic accidents and (ii) adverse weather conditions; and if he will make a statement. [207911]

Mr. Jamieson: Summarised information is not kept in the form requested. I have asked the Highways Agency to provide the information as soon as possible from the detailed records available and to write to the hon. Member and also place copies in the Libraries of the House.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the equipment leasing arrangements entered into by his Department in each of the last two years; and what the cost is to public funds in each case. [202424]

Charlotte Atkins: The information for the central Department (DfT) and its agencies is set out in the table.

		Costs (£)		
	Equipment	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*Additional information*
DfT(C)	Photocopying equipment	55,799.60	64,698.60	DfT leases photocopying equipment (including multifunctional devices) from two suppliers via a framework contract let in 1997. This contract expired on 31 October 2004 and the Department has now switched to using similar contracts put in place by the Office of Government Commerce buying solutions on 1 April 2004.

	Equipment	*Costs (£)* *2002–03*	*Costs (£)* *2003–04*	*Additional information*
Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency	Photocopying equipment	195,481.60	190,778.20	The leasing of this equipment is split on a UK-wide basis between Konica and Energy.
	Despatch mailers	108,753		November 2003 to October 2008. Lease of two mailers from IBM.
Marine and Coastguard Agency	Photocopying equipment	92,473.93	89,608.89	MCA leased photocopying equipment from four suppliers via a DfT contract, which expired 31 October 2004. From 1 January 2004 the MCA has now switched to using similar contracts put in place by the Office of Government Commerce.
Vehicle and Operator Services Agency	Photocopying equipment	226,459.45	205,809.27	VOSA leases photocopying equipment (including multi-functional devices) from one supplier (IKON) via the DfT framework contract let in 1997.
Highways Agency	Multi-functional devices	Cost per financial year not available		25 on three-year lease from 2004–07 at a total cost of £82,780 per annum.
	Photocopying equipment	Cost per financial year not available		Eight on three year lease from 2002–05 at a total cost of £48,000 per annum.
	Vehicle	Cost per financial year not available		One on three-year lease from 2003–06 at a cost of £3,128 per annum.
	Vending machines	Cost per financial year not available		Two on three-year lease from 2003–06 at a total cost of £2,032 per annum.
Vehicle Certification Agency	Photocopiers	7,402.94	8,240.93	VCA leases photocopying equipment from two suppliers (Xerox and Danka) via the DfT framework contract let in 1997.
	Snack machine	834.13	625.65	Snack Machine leased from local supplier Citrus Vending until 26 November 2004.
Driving Standards Agency	Photocopiers	32,479	34,452	DSA leases photocopiers and a small number of fax machines from several suppliers, mainly using Government framework contracts.
	Fax machines	1,021	1,021	DSA leases photocopiers and a small number of fax machines from several suppliers, mainly using Government framework contracts.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the cost of travel within the UK for the Department was in each year since 1997; and how much of this was spent on *(a)* hire cars, *(b)* helicopter hire, *(c)* hotel accommodation and *(d)* subsistence. [206469]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department for Transport came into existence on 29 May 2002 following machinery of Government changes. The total travel and subsistence costs for civil servants in the Department excluding the agencies in 2002–03 were £1,606,589, and in 2003–04 were £1,919,678. Information for earlier years, and the breakdown requested can be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

The totals for the Department's agencies in the same years were £18,696,176 (2002–03), and £21,975,803 (2003–04).

All travel undertaken by civil servants in the Department for Transport complied with the requirements of the Civil Service Management Code.

Information relating to overseas travel by Ministers is published on an annual basis. Information for the period 2 May 1997 to 31 March 2004 is available in the Library of the House. Information for the financial year 2004–05 will be published as soon as possible at the end of the current financial year.

Disabled Air Passengers

Mr. Hunter: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he will make representations to the relevant bodies in the European Union to ensure consistency across Europe of the implementation of the recommended practices of the European Civil Aviation Conference in respect of disabled passengers, with particular reference to those who are deaf or who have impaired hearing; and if he will make a statement; [208187]

(2) if he will take measures to ensure consistency of implementation by UK airlines of his Department's Code of Practice regarding disabled passengers, with particular reference to those who are deaf or have impaired hearing. [208188]

Charlotte Atkins: Following the publication of the voluntary code "Access to Air Travel for Disabled People—Code of Practice", which we published in March 2003, we commissioned the Transport Research Laboratory to monitor the industry's take up of the code's recommendations. It is looking at compliance generally and not specifically in relation to any particular group of disabled people. The research is due to be completed towards the end of this year.

We have said that we will legislate in this field if the voluntary approach proves ineffective and the outcome of the research will be used to inform our decision.

The UK Chairs the European Civil Aviation Conference's (ECAC) Facilitation Working Group on air travel for people with reduced mobility. We work alongside other member states to promote the recommended practices which ECAC has introduced. On the domestic front the ECAC recommended practices were the basis for our Code of Practice. At a recent meeting of the ECAC Facilitation working group we raised a number of issues relating to air travel for deaf and hard or hearing people. The group has agreed to consider those and have included them on their agenda for their next meeting later this month.

Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when the DVLA was last audited by the National Audit Office. [208670]

Mr. Jamieson: The last audit was in respect of DVLA's 2003–04 Business Accounts and Trust Statement. The Certificate and Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General to the House of Commons were signed by Sir John Bourn on 20 July 2004.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many fines were issued to drivers for failing to update their details with the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency in each of the last five years. [208282]

Mr. Jamieson: The number of penalty letters issued for failure to notify disposal of a vehicle were as follows:

January to December	*Number*
2000–00	18,970
2001–01	34,944
2002–02	71,627
2003–03	74,570
2004–04	65,420

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the latest figures are for the take-up of online *(a)* first-time vehicle registration and *(b)* driving licence application and renewal; and what steps he has taken to evaluate consumer satisfaction with the processes. [208644]

Mr. Jamieson: The latest full year figures available for vehicle first registrations, for 2003–04, show that 2,539,861 new vehicles (or 78.21 per cent.) were processed though the Automated First Registration and Licensing (AFRL) system out of a total of 3,247,359.

At present, the only driver licensing transaction conducted electronically is the Automatic Driving Licence Issue (ADLI) of an exchange licence following a test pass. This system was introduced in August 2004 and, up to 31 December 2004, 41,057 (or 10.24 per cent.) licence exchanges have been processed via this route out of a total Of 400,825.

DVLA regularly conduct customer satisfaction surveys to ensure that the services provided are in line with customer expectations. The last such survey was undertaken in November 2004.

Regional Transport Boards

Mr. Spring: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether road improvement plans already accepted by his Department will be implemented by new regional transport boards; and if he will make a statement. [208045]

Mr. Jamieson: Implementation of road improvement plans agreed by the Department will continue to be the responsibility of the Highways Agency in the case of the trunk road network and of local transport authorities in the case of local roads.

Mr. Spring: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what estimate he has made of the cost of a Regional Transport Board for the East of England; [208048]

(2) what advice his Department has given to *(a)* regional assemblies and *(b)* regional development agencies on the composition of a Regional Transport Board. [208050]

Charlotte Atkins: In the consultation document "Devolving decision making: a consultation on regional funding allocations" the Government indicated that they do not intend to prescribe institutional arrangements for how regions should coordinate and prepare advice on regional priorities. It will be for regions themselves to decide if they wish to establish Regional Transport Boards or other arrangements, and the consultation seeks regional views on the mechanisms and processes which need to be put in place. In reaching their views, regions will be able to draw on the experience of the experimental Transport Boards which were established in the South East and Yorkshire and Humberside last year. Copies of the consultation document are available in the House Libraries.

Local/Regional Transport Plans

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what role *(a)* regional chambers and *(b)* regional transport boards will play in supervising the development of local authorities' local transport plans; and if he will make a statement. [207959]

Charlotte Atkins: We have no plans to give regional transport boards or regional chambers a supervisory role in relation to the development of local transport plans by local transport authorities.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport to what extent local authorities are required to follow regional transport plans; and if he will make a statement. [207964]

Charlotte Atkins: We have, as part of the guidance on Local Transport Plans published in December 2004, advised local transport authorities outside London to outline how their plans and proposals for major schemes are consistent with the policies and priorities in regional transport strategies. We have also advised the authorities to consider in detail in their local transport plans how to achieve the outcomes set out in the regional transport strategies, where these require action at local level. Ultimately decisions about which proposals to include in local transport plans are solely for the local authorities concerned. Copies of the 'Full Guidance on Local Transport Plans' are available in the House Libraries.

M5

Mr. Dhanda: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what figures his Department has compiled for the number of road accidents between junctions 12 and 12a of the M5 in the past 12 months. [208821]

Mr. Jamieson: There is no junction 12a on the M5 and the accident figures provided are between junctions 12 and 11A. The last period of 12 months for which figures are available is between August 2003 and July 2004. During this time there were 15 accidents, 13 slight and two fatal.

Merchant Shipping

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what steps the Government are taking to widen the existing link between tonnage tax and seafarer employment to include a requirement to employ junior officers; [207996]

(2) if he will make a statement on the work being undertaken by the Shipping Task Force on employment in the UK fleet. [207997]

Mr. Jamieson: I have recently approved new terms of reference for the Shipping Task Force so that work to develop proposals for improving the employment environment can be taken forward by a specially constituted sub-group of this body. This will include consideration of representations made to the post-implementation review of tonnage tax. I have asked the sub-group to submit initial proposals on ways to improve the employment environment, agreed by all parties, by June 2005.

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if the UK will support the International Labour Organisation's proposed bill of rights for seafarers; and if he will make a statement. [207998]

Mr. Jamieson: The UK welcomes the development of the consolidated international convention on maritime labour standards. The UK is playing an active role in negotiating the text of the new convention.

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when the Government intend to enforce the European Commission ruling that non-resident EU seafarers should be employed on the wage rates prevailing under the flag of their ship. [207999]

Mr. Jamieson: EC law provides that if a seafarer from a member state is employed solely in the territory of another member state, or his employment is closely connected with that other state, he should not be discriminated against on the grounds of nationality, when compared with seafarers from the host state.

Having considered this issue, we believe it may be necessary to revise sections 8 and 9 of the Race Relations Act 1976 so that if a close enough link (to be defined) existed between an EEA seafarer and the flag state of the ship on which they were working, they could not be paid at a differential rate from other workers with a similarly close link to the flag state (i.e. resident seafarers).

Our next steps will be to work closely with all those with an interest in this issue to develop and agree proposed revisions to the RRA 1976, by way of secondary legislation which will then be subject to full consultation.

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment his Department has made of the threat to the shipping industry of a terrorist attack; what steps the Government are taking to minimise this risk; and if he will make a statement. [208000]

Mr. Jamieson: Threats to the shipping industry are assessed by the intelligence agencies. Transport Security Directorate (TRANSEC) of the Department for Transport considers the assessment and implements one of the three security levels prescribed by the International Port Facility and Security Code (ISPS). The security measures required at each security level are proportionate to the threat as assessed and thereby serve to minimise potential risks to the industry. TRANSEC continues to work with industry to ensure that those requirements are proportional, pragmatic and sustainable.

Motorway Crashes

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many people died as a result of crashes that occurred on hard shoulders of English motorways in 2004. [208214]

Mr. Jamieson: The information requested is not available. Final figures for road accidents and casualties in Great Britain in 2004 will become available in June 2005. However, in 2003 there were 10 fatalities in crashes on hard shoulders on English motorways.

Rail Services

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) how many passengers departed from London Paddington on *(a)* First Great Western and *(b)* First Great Western Link services in the latest month for which figures are available, broken down by (i) morning peak time, (ii) afternoon peak time and (iii) off-peak time; [208497]

(2) how many passengers arrived at London Paddington on *(a)* First Great Western and *(b)* First Great Western Link services in the latest month for which figures are available, broken down by (i) morning peak time, (ii) afternoon peak time and (iii) off-peak time. [208499]

Mr. McNulty: The available daily passenger figures are shown as follows.

	(i) morning peak time	*(ii) afternoon peak time*	*(iii) off-peak time*
FGWL arrivals at Paddington	10,874	—	—
FGWL departures from Paddington	—	9,627	—
FGW arrivals at Paddington	9,484	—	11,040
FGW departures from Paddington	—	9,761	9,021

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he will place in the Library a copy of First Great Western Link's latest passenger survey conducted on the route from London Paddington to *(a)* Maidenhead and *(b)* Twyford; [208498]

(2) when First Great Western last conducted a passenger survey of the number of commuters and rail passengers on the route from London Paddington to *(a)* Maidenhead and *(b)* Twyford. [208501]

Mr. McNulty: A copy of First Great Western (FGW) and First Great Western Link (FGWL) survey results for November/December 2004 has been placed in the Libraries of the House.

Roads

Mr. Spring: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much money has been allocated for road improvement schemes in the East of England for *(a)* 2005–06, *(b)* 2006–07 and *(c)* 2007–08. [208046]

Mr. Jamieson: The Highways Agency plans to spend £143 million on major road improvements in the region in 2005–06. Funding allocations of £35 million for 2005–06 have been made to local authorities to progress major road improvement schemes. In addition allocations totalling £65 million for 2005–06 have been made for local authorities to progress lesser transport (including road improvement) capital schemes. It is up to the local authorities to decide how much of this £65 million is spent on road improvements. Allocations have not yet been made for 2006–07 and 2007–08.

Mr. Spring: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the projected cost is for the proposed scheme to upgrade the section of the A11 between the Fiveways Roundabout at Barton Mills in Suffolk and Thetford. [208047]

Mr. Jamieson: The scheme budget costs for the A11 Fiveways to Thetford Improvement is currently £60 million. This scheme has been remitted for regional priority setting and that the Highways Agency will be continuing to progress the preparation of the scheme to proceed to construction in 2008–09. The Agency will review the scheme costs as part of that process.

Virginia Bottomley: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what discussions he held with his predecessor with regard to the proposed A3 tunnel at Hindhead. [208220]

Mr. Jamieson: None.

Shipping

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what powers exist to regulate shipping movements within UK territorial waters; and who may exercise these powers. [208159]

Mr. Jamieson *[holding answer 13 January 2005]:* The Secretary of State's statutory powers of intervention to regulate shipping in UK territorial waters can be found in Schedule 3A of the Merchant Shipping Act 1995, the Marine Safety Act 2003 which amends the 1995 Act and extends his powers, and the Dangerous Vessels Act 1985.

This gives the Secretary of State for Transport the function of giving direction for, or co-ordinating, measures to reduce risks to life or safety of a ship or ships or prevent, reduce and minimise the effects of marine pollution. The Secretary of State's Representative (SOSREP), or an officer of the Department's Maritime and Coastguard Agency acting on SOSREP's behalf, may exercise these functions, including the Secretary of State's intervention powers.

The UK implements the Convention on the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, which, among other things, obliges ships to comply with Traffic Separation Schemes, as exists in the English Channel, which have been adopted by the International Maritime Organisation (IMO). Enforcement of these requirements is carried out by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency. Other recommendatory routeing measures, for example Areas to be Avoided and Precautionary Areas, are in place to assist safe navigation around the shores of the UK.

Any action taken by the UK to regulate shipping movements must necessarily be consistent with international law, most particularly the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

Trams

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will bring forward proposals to develop a tram network that would cover the Greater London area in co-operation with London local authorities and the Greater London assembly; and if he will make a statement. [208654]

Mr. McNulty: Following the creation of the Greater London authority, Transport for London (TfL), under the Mayor, is responsible for drawing up London's transport strategy and the development of tram schemes in London.

Waterways

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many miles of waterways and canals have been lost for transportation purposes each year since 1997. [208172]

Mr. Jamieson: Information is available for Great Britain for 1995 and 2002. Between these years commercial waterway track reduced by 88 km.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many tonnes of freight have been transported on waterways and canals in each year since 1997. [208173]

Mr. Jamieson: The annual tonnage of freight transported on UK inland waters, including canals, from 1997 to 2003, the latest year for which information is available, was as follows.

	UK inland waters freight traffic (million tonnes)
1997	58.5
1998	57.3
1999	53.8
2000	49.0
2001	53.5
2002	49.0
2003	47.4

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has made of how many additional tonnes of freight have been transported by road rather than on waterways and canals as a result of development of waterways and canals for non-transportation purposes in each year since 1997. [illegible]174]

Mr. Jamieson: No information is available.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

Divisions

John Mann: To ask the Leader of the House what the average number of hon. Members taking part in Divisions at sittings on Fridays has been since June 2001. [207876]

Mr. Hain: The average number of hon. Members voting in Divisions on a Friday since June 2001 is 68.

European Union

Mr. Brady: To ask the Leader of the House by what procedure he intends that the UK Parliament should arrive at a reasoned opinion (1) as to whether a draft European legislative act fails to comply with the principle of subsidiarity, within six weeks of the receipt of the draft as proposed in article 6 of the second protocol to the proposed EU Constitution; [208253]

(2) on compliance of a European draft legislative act with the principle of subsidiarity within six weeks of its transmission to the UK Parliament where that transmission occurs either during or immediately prior to a parliamentary recess. [208254]

Mr. Hain: It is for the two Houses of Parliament to decide what parliamentary procedures would be most effective to implement the subsidiarity early warning mechanism. The matter is currently under consideration by the Select Committee on the Modernisation of the House of Commons, and by the House of Lords European Union Committee. Evidence submitted by the European Scrutiny Committee to the Modernisation Committee's inquiry on this point has been published on the Parliament website. The Committees are addressing the question of how the mechanism would operate when Parliament is in recess. The Government awaits the two Committees' recommendations with interest.

Pre-legislative Scrutiny

Mr. Heald: To ask the Leader of the House how many *(a)* written and *(b)* oral submissions of evidence were made to each pre-legislative scrutiny committee held since 1997; and how many were submitted by (i) individuals, (ii) voluntary sector groups, (iii) statutory sector organisations, (iv) employers and (v) employer organisations. [208671]

Mr. Hain: Pre-legislative scrutiny has been undertaken by a variety of different committees, in both Houses. A helpful list is provided in the Library's Standard Note on pre-legislative scrutiny (SN/PC/2822, available on the internet at http://www.parliament.uk/works/notes_on_parliament_and_constitution.cfm.)

The information requested is obtainable from the published reports of these Committees, but could be collated only at disproportionate cost. The annual Sessional Return also provides relevant information, though not categorised in the form requested.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Leader of the House whether the contracts signed by his special advisers differ from the Model Contract for Special Advisers. [207230]

Mr. Hain: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister earlier today.

SCOTLAND

Departmental Files

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether it is the policy of the Department to retain for the benefit of future *(a)* historians and *(b)* applicants under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 the same (i) complete categories of files, (ii) numbers of files and (iii) representative examples of files from categories of files destroyed as had been preserved prior to the passage of that Act. [203310]

Mrs. McGuire: In accordance with the Public Records Act 1958 S.3, the selection of records of enduring historical value for permanent preservation at The National Archives (TNA) will continue to take place in the Scotland Office under the guidance and supervision of TNA staff. The Office will also comply with the Code of Practice on Records Management, issued by the Lord Chancellor under S.46 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, which underlines the importance of having clear selection policies and disposal schedules in place.

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many departmental files have been destroyed in each of the past five years. [203311]

Mrs. McGuire: The Scotland Office was established on 1 July 1999. Since that date, no files have been destroyed.

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what changes have been promulgated in each of the past five years to the guidelines or other criteria for the retention or destruction of departmental files. [203312]

Mrs. McGuire: The Scotland Office was established on 1 July 1999. Since that date, the Scotland Office has made no changes to guidelines.

Departmental Telephones

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what his policy is on the use of telephones in his Department by members of staff for their personal use for *(a)* domestic calls and *(b)* international calls; and if he will make a statement. [201082]

Mrs. McGuire: Staff are permitted to make limited personal calls of short duration on local networks. In cases where there is a genuine need to make a significant number of personal calls, staff are encouraged to use call cards to have the cost charged to their home telephone. Monitoring of telephone usage is delegated to local managers who are assisted by the provision of reports which provide details of calls made by staff in their area.

Where it can be justified for business reasons, the Office provides staff with mobile telephones. The use of these phones to make personal calls is permitted on the clear understanding that the cost is refunded. Procedures are in place for the invoices to be reviewed and staff are asked to declare if any calls are personal and refund the cost.

Access on all phones to international numbers is restricted to those with a business need and is only provided when authorised by local managers. Calls to premium rate numbers are barred.

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what measures have been taken to ensure the telephones in his Department are not used by staff for making unauthorised personal calls to international numbers. [201083]

Mrs. McGuire: Access to international numbers is only granted to staff that have a business need to make such calls and is provided only when authorised by local managers.

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what the estimated cost to his Department is of unauthorised personal calls made by members of staff to *(a)* domestic numbers and *(b)* international numbers. [201084]

Mrs. McGuire: Details of unauthorised personal calls by members of staff to domestic numbers are not held centrally and therefore no estimate of costs can be provided. Access to international numbers is only granted to staff that have a business need to make such calls and is provided only when authorised by local managers.

Invoice Payments

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what the average length of time was between the date of invoices issued to his Department from a supplier and payment by the Department of the invoice in the last 12 months for which figures are available; what percentage of these invoices were paid within 30 days of the date of issue of the invoice; what percentage of these invoices remained unpaid after 90 days; and if he will make a statement on the Department's policy on the payment of invoices issued to it. [200625]

Mrs. McGuire: During the period 1 April 2003 to 31 March 2004, the Scotland Office, which also provides support to the Office of the Advocate-General, paid supplier invoices, on average, within 26.6 days (unaudited figure). During this period, the offices paid 96.8 per cent. of undisputed invoices within 30 days or the agreed credit terms. The Offices had one payment unpaid after 90 days, which represents 0.0002 per cent. of invoices.

The Government are committed to improving the payment culture in the UK in order to create a fair and stable environment for business transactions. Government Departments and their agencies should aim to pay all invoices not in dispute within 30 days or within the agreed contractual terms if otherwise specified; the Offices support this policy.

Travel Costs

Mr. Ruffley: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what the total travel costs to his Department have been for *(a)* Ministers, *(b)* special advisers and *(c)* officials for each year since 1997. [203795]

Mrs. McGuire *[holding answer 9 December 2004]:* The Scotland Office was established on 1 July 1999.

Since 1999 the Government have published, on an annual basis, the total costs of all ministerial overseas travel and a list of all visits by Cabinet Ministers costing in excess of £500. Copies of the lists are available in the Library of the House. The travel costs of special advisers who accompany their Minister overseas are included in the annual list of overseas travel by Cabinet Ministers.

Since 1 July 1999, the other travel costs by the Scotland Office were:

£

	1999–2000	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*[1]
Ministers	27,783	36,843	30,570	19,788	1,155
Special Advisers	10,246	20,700	33,888	37,672	16,841
Officials	108,990	188,930	219,876	241,629	181,872
Total	147,019	246,473	284,334	290,089	199,868

[1] Since June 2003, part of the travel costs of the Secretary of State have been met by the Department of Transport.

All ministerial travel is undertaken fully in accordance with the rules set out in the "Ministerial Code" and "Travel by Ministers" and all official travel is undertaken in accordance with the rules contained in the Civil Service Management Code, copies of which are available in the Library of the House.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Sudan

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what estimate he has made of the number of child soldiers in Darfur. [209067]

Hilary Benn: There is no reliable information on the number of child soldiers in Darfur.

The United Kingdom has raised this issue with the Government of Sudan and the rebel movement on a regular basis. DFID will continue to work closely with organisations such as UNICEF, who are the main co-ordinators in the child protection sector, to address this issue.

Departmental Entertainment Costs

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much has been spent on entertainment by his Department in each year since 1997, broken down by *(a)* food, *(b)* alcohol, *(c)* staff and *(d)* accommodation. [204347]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: Figures for entertainment within administration costs budgets for years for which information is readily available are shown as follows:

	£
1996–97	10,000
1997–98	24,000
1998–99	43,000
1999–2000	62,000
2000–01	48,000
2001–02	55,000
2002–03	82,000
2003–04	219,000

The figures for entertainment include working breakfasts and lunches, refreshments at meetings and official entertainment. It is not possible to disaggregate specific entertainment costs relating to food, alcohol, staff and accommodation without incurring a disproportionate cost.

All entertainment is made in accordance with published departmental guidance on financial procedures and propriety, based on principles set out in Government Accounting.

In 2003–04 DFID introduced new procedures to draw together administration costs, including those entertainment costs which had previously been recorded on country programme budgets. These changes have improved transparency and management of administration costs, but mean that figures from 2003–04 now include entertainment costs that were previously funded by country programmes and as a result are not comparable with earlier years.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much the Department spent on lawyers in each year since 1997; how many *(a)* actions, *(b)* settlements and *(c)* court cases there were in each year; and what the costs were of each settlement. [206459]

Hilary Benn: DFID obtains advice on litigation through the Treasury Solicitor's Department. The cost of this advice for the years in question was as follows.

	Cost (£)
1997–98	12,761
1998–99	1,288
1999–2000	5,969
2000–01	11,085
2001–02	51,587
2002–03	38,993
2003–04	63,043
2004–05	18,146

DFID does not hold information centrally on the details and costs of individual cases, which could therefore be provided only at disproportionate cost.

I also refer the hon. Member to the answer given to the House last year by the Foreign Secretary on 16 June 2003, *Official Report*, columns 44–45W.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the running costs of the Department were in each year since 1997, broken down by *(a)* electricity, *(b)* water, *(c)* gas, *(d)* telephones, *(e)* mobile telephones and *(f)* televisions. [206672]

Hilary Benn: Figures for UK based offices for electricity, water, gas and telephone costs within administration budgets for years for which information is readily available are shown as follows.

£

	2001–02	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
Electricity	215,537	260,566	290,160
Water	71,408	37,716	44,409
Gas	311,571	320,792	355,858
Telephones	706,000	586,000	592,000

Information for earlier years is not readily available and in some cases will no longer be held also it is not possible to disaggregate separate costs for mobile phones or televisions without incurring a disproportionate cost.

Earthquake Aid

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much aid has been given by the UK Government to the reconstruction in Bam, Iran, in the aftermath of the earthquake of 2003, broken down by *(a)* monetary aid and *(b)* resources and materials; and what proportion has been sent so far to the area. [207795]

Hilary Benn: Following the earthquake in Bam, the Department for International Development committed £1,676,640 to support immediate humanitarian needs and rebuild livelihoods. £1,206,640 was channelled through United Nations agencies and non-governmental organisations as financial support.

From the balance, DFID provided 68 search and rescue specialists and four DFID personnel, 450 family winter tents and other shelter materials for distribution by the Iranian Red Crescent as well as two cargo aircraft put at the disposal of the Iranian Government.

In addition, the European Community Humanitarian Aid Office contributed €8.5 million for emergency relief and rehabilitation of which the UK's share was €1.445 million (£1.01 million).

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the value was of the total UK contribution to the earthquake emergencies and reconstructions in *(a)* Bhuj, India and *(b)* Bam, Iran. [208038]

Hilary Benn: In response to the earthquake in Bhuj, India, the Department for International Development provided £8,749,426 for emergency relief and to help to rebuild livelihoods. This money was channelled through international organisations such as the UN agencies and the Red Cross, and international and local non-governmental organisations. The World Bank and the Asian Development Bank are funding the reconstruction programme with loans of US $1 billion and US $500 million respectively.

Following the Bam earthquake, DFID committed £1,676,640 for the immediate and medium term relief. In addition, the European Community Humanitarian Aid Office contributed €8.5 million for emergency relief and rehabilitation of which the UK's share was €1.445 million (£1.01 million).

Emergency Reserve

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what funds remain in his Department's emergency reserve; and what plans he has to increase them. [209051]

Hilary Benn: DFID has now fully allocated its Central Contingency Reserve for 2004–05 to fund humanitarian relief programmes in tsunami affected countries. We retain a small provision within our humanitarian budget for continuing humanitarian responses over the remaining period of this financial year.

EU Presidency

Sir Archy Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what priorities have been identified for action in the fields of international reconstruction and development during the UK's presidency of the EU. [208372]

Hilary Benn: 2005 is a year of opportunity for development, with the UK presidencies of the G8 and the European Union, the United Nations Millennium Review Summit in September and the World Trade Organisation Ministerial in Hong Kong in December. As the world's largest aid donor and key trading partner of most developing countries, the EU has a very important role to play in seizing this opportunity and helping to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The Government's first task during the EU presidency will be to take forward the work we inherit from the Luxembourg presidency. This is likely to feature discussions on development financing and crisis management. It will also include reconstruction work following the Indian Ocean tsunami and the EU's contribution to reconstruction and development work in countries such as Iraq and Afghanistan.

We plan to use the meetings that we will chair to focus the EU on helping to meet the MDGs with particular attention on Africa and diseases such as AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. We will also seek to further improve the effectiveness and poverty-focus of EC external spending.

Iraq

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what medical facilities are available to treat civilians injured during the last attack on Fallujah. [208246]

Hilary Benn: The Iraqi Ministry of Health (MoH) is responsible for providing adequate medical facilities and healthcare for all of the population of Iraq. The MoH made provisions to treat injured civilians during military operations in Fallujah at hospitals and clinics near to the city. Multi-National Force-Iraq also had medical facilities at a base near Fallujah which were available to treat injured civilians in emergencies. The main hospital in Fallujah is now operational and the Iraqi Ministry of Health has delivered adequate basic medical supplies to the hospital and to clinics in the city. Most of Fallujah's civilian population left the city before military operations began and have been provided with essential food, water, shelter and medical supplies in the surrounding area.

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what estimate he has made of the number of residents of Fallujah who have been able to return to their homes; what assistance has been provided by *(a)* the UK Government, *(b)* the US Administration and *(c)* the Iraqi authorities to the residents of Fallujah; what the cost of the assistance has been in each case; what assessment he has made of the conditions in which residents who have not returned to their homes are living; what assessment he has made of provisions made for them to participate in the Iraqi elections; and if he will make a statement. [208260]

Hilary Benn: Most areas of Fallujah are now open to the returning population. The number of people returning to the city is increasing steadily. By 14 January, over 100,000 people had crossed the checkpoints into the city since returns began on 23 December although far fewer are staying overnight. It is estimated that between 8,000 and 15,000 citizens are now living in the city.

The Iraqi Interim Government (IIG) is leading on assistance to the people of Fallujah. The IIG Fallujah Core Co-ordination Group is liaising with multi-national and Iraqi forces who are providing security in the city, and is co-ordinating the provision of essential supplies by Iraqi Government Ministries. Food, medical items, tents and plastic sheeting, and water by tanker and bottle are getting through to the people in Fallujah. The IIG is providing an initial $100 welfare payment for each family returning to the city, and is finalising plans for more extensive compensation for damaged homes and businesses. Figures are not yet available on the cost of this assistance.

The IIG is also developing medium and long-term reconstruction plans for the city and has set aside funds from the Iraqi budget for this work. The Minister of Industry has been charged with coordinating the work of the key Iraqi ministries involved.

DFID is providing advice to the IIG Core Co-ordination Group on health, humanitarian and coordination issues, and DFID staff have made assessment visits to Fallujah.

United States military forces operating in the area have established Humanitarian Assistance sites in the city and have announced that they will provide $200 for each household in Fallujah. US forces are also helping to provide security for the returning families, which has been good so far. United States agencies report that they have planned around 100 reconstruction projects in the Fallujah area totalling $84.1 million. Several US-funded projects have been contracted and are due to begin soon, including a $20 million project to refurbish the sewerage system, and projects to refurbish and equip local council offices.

A large proportion of Fallujah's population is yet to return to the city. Many families are staying in the surrounding area, mostly with host families or in public buildings. Iraqi ministries and aid agencies continue to deliver essential supplies to these areas. Welfare payments for displaced people are being distributed through banks in the areas where they are currently living.

The Independent Electoral Commission for Iraq (IECI) has established plans to allow Fallujah's displaced citizens to vote in the national elections at the end of January. The IECI has made special arrangements for same-day registration and voting at centres spread across the Al Anbar Governorate, and has asked Multi-National Force-Iraq to provide extra security at polling stations.

IT Projects

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will list his Department's IT projects for each year since 1997, broken down by *(a)* amount spent, *(b)* purpose, *(c)* cost of over-run and *(d)* time of over-run. [205782]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: This question cannot be answered without incurring a disproportionate cost.

Newspapers/Periodicals

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will list the *(a)* newspapers and *(b)* periodicals taken by his Department in each year since 1997; and how much the Department spent on each in each year. [207642]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID lists as follows the cost for newspapers and periodicals from 1997 to the last full financial year. All costs before 2002 were from a central budget. After 2002 only core newspapers and periodicals were centrally funded and access transferred from print to electronic editions (for heavily used and requested periodicals). Due to the disproportionate cost of listing every newspaper and periodical taken since 1997 only the current core centrally funded newspapers and periodicals are listed.

(a) Newspapers

	£
1997–98	4,786.32
1998–99	5,151
1999–2000	5,748
2000–01	2,540
2001–02	3,827.05
2002–03	2,514.13
2003–04	6,341.17

Current Newspapers

Subscriptions	*Copies (Monday to Friday)*	*Annual cost (£)*
Daily Telegraph	1	156.00
East Kilbride News	1	30.16
Financial Times	2	520.00
Guardian	2	312.00
Herald	1	143.00
Independent	2	312.00
Scotsman	1	130.00
Times	2	260.00
Total cost	—	1,863.16

(b) Periodicals

	£
1997–98	57,639.38
1998–99	63,000.00
1999–2000	65,660.00
2000–01	97,824.00
2001–02	75,609.00
2002–03	131,323.00
2003–04	108,112.00

Current periodicals

Subscriptions	*Number of copies*	*Annual cost (£)*
Africa Analysis (electronic)	1	1,530.36
Africa Confidential—Oxford (electronic)	1	500.78
Africa Health	1	69.33
Africa Insight	1	33.49
Africa Research Bulletin: Series B Economic Series (electronic)	1	690.31
Africa Today—Bloomington	1	87.58
African Business	1	47.09
African Farming and Food Processing	1	63.57
African Journal of Reproductive Health	1	82.16
AIDS: an International Monthly Journal (electronic)	1	977.95
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Total cost		99,743.25

Ottawa Convention

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the outcome of the Review Conference relating to the Ottawa Convention; what the positions of the UK Government were; and to what extent they were achieved. [208199]

Hilary Benn: Notwithstanding the fact that much progress has been made by the international community since the entry into force of the Ottawa Convention in 1999, the Government is fully aware of the suffering still caused by anti-personnel landmines. The United Kingdom thus stressed throughout the preparatory stage, that the first Review Conference should be used, not only to celebrate the achievements of the last five years, but also to refocus efforts over the next five years on the continuing humanitarian cost of anti-personnel landmines.

Outcomes which reflected the UK's aspirations for the Conference included:

(i) a 70-point action plan 2005–09 to direct further work under the Convention;

(ii) acknowledgement in the action plan of the need for building mine action into wider development programmes;

(iii) recognition that mine action is fundamental to the advancement of the Millennium Development Goals;

(iv) recognition that broadening and increasing the funding base for mine action is essential;

(v) recognition of the desirability of integrating mine action into the programmes of the World Bank and regional development banks.

DFID will continue to be a major donor in global mine action and has plans to spend at least £10 million per year for the next three years.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many complaints were made by departmental civil servants regarding the conduct of special advisers between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004. [203472]

Hilary Benn: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my right hon. Friend, the then Minister for the Cabinet Office, (Ruth Kelly) on 13 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 946W.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many special advisers there are in the Department, broken down by civil service pay-grade. [206510]

Hilary Benn: I refer the hon. Member for Tatton to the reply given by my hon. Friend, the Minister for the Cabinet Office, (Mr. Miliband) on 21 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1604W.

Sri Lanka

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what discussions he has had with the Sri Lankan Government to ensure that all Tamil communities in Sri Lanka are now receiving food, medical supplies and other assistance; and if he will make a statement. [208727]

Hilary Benn: During my visit to Sri Lanka on 8 January I met with local government officials and MPs in Batticola. Officials in the DFID Sri Lanka office are holding regular discussions with government officials concerning the needs, priorities and strategies in relation to the delivery of humanitarian assistance. DFID's humanitarian response has been channelled through United Nations agencies, the Red Cross movement, and non-governmental organisations and in direct in kind help aimed at addressing immediate needs. DFID has supported the United Nations in undertaking impact and needs assessments, coordination, technical advice and air movements logistics support. The assistance that we have provided, and are supporting, is geographically spread throughout the country. This includes substantial support to Tamil communities in proportion to needs across the country.

Stolen Property

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) if he will list the property belonging to his Department that has *(a)* been stolen and *(b)* been reported lost in each year since 1997, broken down by type of article; [206371]

(2) how many items of civil service property within his Department are unaccounted for, broken down by type. [205573]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: The number of items reported stolen or lost in the UK and overseas is as set out: Information for 1997 is not readily available and could not be obtained without incurring disproportionate cost.

	Lost	*Stolen*
1998	Printer	2 × laptops
	Answer phone	10 × computers
	Tape recorder	—
2000	4 × laptops	Vehicle
	Cutlery	—
2001	Pager	3 × telephones
	Disc drive	Fax machine
	—	2 × scanners
	—	2 × laser printers
	—	Colour printer
	—	Laptop
	—	Vehicle
2002	Conference phone	Video camera
	2 × laptops	7 × laptops
	Books	3 × vehicles
	2 × VCR	Building materials
	—	2 × projectors
	—	Digital camera
2003	Laptop	6 × laptops
	Cutlery	—
2004	—	2 × laptops
	—	Digital camera

Tsunami Relief

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will publish written statements on a monthly basis on the progress of UK Government aid to countries hit by the Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami indicating *(a)* amounts spent in pounds sterling, *(b)* quantity and nature of materials purchased and *(c)* the proportion of materials sent out to those countries in need. [207793]

Hilary Benn: DFID presently produces daily situation reports that are published on the Department for International Development's website: www.dfid.gov.uk. We will continue to keep the House informed of our continuing relief effort, by means of written statements as appropriate.

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development from which funds money pledged by the Government to help the victims of the Indian earthquake and tsunami has been provided; and if he will make a statement. [207794]

Hilary Benn: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the statement made by the Prime Minister to the House of Commons on 10 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 24. As the Prime Minister explained, the Government have so far committed £75 million towards the immediate humanitarian response to the Indian Ocean disaster. The Government's commitment has been funded from both DFID's and HM Treasury's contingency budgets comprising: DFID's humanitarian contingency budget (£20 million), DFID's central Contingency Reserve (£30 million), and the Treasury's Reserve (£25 million).

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps are being taken to ascertain the humanitarian situation in Burma following the Asian tsunami disaster; and if he will make a statement. [209026]

Hilary Benn: At the onset of the disaster, a Tsunami Assistance Co-ordination Group, composed of international NGOs, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and UN agencies and chaired by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) was established in Burma. Over the next 10 days, Co-ordination Group members undertook a series of assessment and verification missions—to the Rakhine Coast, the Irawaddy Delta and the southern coast including the most populated islands of the Myeik archipelago and the islands off Kawthaung around Lampi Island. On 6 January 2005, the group met to consolidate the findings of the different assessment and verification missions. It concluded that Burma had been largely spared from the destructive forces of the earthquake and subsequent tsunami, and that initial emergency needs had been met. The group's assessment was a death toll of 60 to 80, and an estimated longer-term affected population of 10,000 to 15,000 (of whom 5,000 to 7,000 were directly affected). Assessment of longer-term reconstruction and rehabilitation needs is currently ongoing.

Ms Keeble: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps are being taken to co-ordinate the contributions of different donor countries to the tsunami disaster relief programmes. [208137]

Hilary Benn: The lead responsibility for co-ordinating the response to the disaster rests with the United Nations. Margareta Wahlstrom has been appointed as the United Nations Special Co-ordinator for Humanitarian Assistance in Tsunami Affected Countries and is working in the region. A Special Representative of the Secretary-General is expected to be appointed for the region.

Immediately following news of the disaster, we provided two experts to the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Co-ordination mechanism for deployment to affected countries. DFID has since been providing a range of practical assistance to help the United Nations be sufficiently equipped and resourced to meet its co-ordination and response role.

International co-ordination is also being progressed through a series of international meetings. On 6 January, the Foreign Secretary attended the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) summit, in Jakarta, my Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State attended the meeting of the General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) of the European Union, in Brussels on 7 January, and on 11 January, I attended a donor conference arranged by the United Nations, in Geneva, following the launch of their Regional Appeal. DFID has pledged a contribution of £40 million in response to this Appeal from our £75 million allocation to the immediate relief effort.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

BAE Systems

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether the Export Credits Guarantee Department has been asked *(a)* to supply information to and *(b)* to co-operate with the Serious Fraud Office in respect of its investigation into allegations of bribery and false accounting concerning BAE Systems and Saudi Arabian officials. [207743]

Mr. Alexander: It would be wrong to comment on individual investigations, as it would risk prejudicing the investigation. However, ECGD will co-operate fully with any requests for co-operation from authorities investigating allegations of bribery and corruption.

Distance Marketing Directive

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps the Government are taking to comply with the European Distance Marketing Directive. [206626]

Mr. Timms: I have been asked to reply.

The Government consulted in July 2003 and the Financial Services Authority consulted in September 2003 on the approaches to implementing European Directive 2002/65/EC concerning the Distance Marketing of Consumer Financial Services.

The Financial Services (Distance Marketing) Regulations 2004 made Under Statutory Instrument 2004 No. 2095 was laid before Parliament on 5 August 2004 and came into force in the UK on 31 October 2004. The Financial Services Authority amended its Handbook to implement the Distance Marketing of Consumer Financial Services Directive.

Fuel Poverty

Mr. Letwin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions she has had with the *(a)* Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the *(b)* Secretary of State for Work and Pensions about (i) fuel poverty, (ii) energy efficiency and the (iii) take-up of energy-related benefits. [208135]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: There is regular contact between the Departments on fuel poverty related issues, energy efficiency and the take up of energy-related benefits. We also work closely with other interested Departments including the Department for Work and Pensions with a view to assisting the fuel poor.

Oil

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what part of the recent increase in the price of oil was attributed by Ofgem to market sentiment and risk; and what assessment she has made of who the beneficiaries of those elements of the increase are. [206217]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: In October, Ofgem released the final report of its gas price probe, which analysed the potential causes of the significant movements in forward gas prices for winter 2004–05. Ofgem estimated that up to 46 per cent. of the price increases for contracts delivering in this period related to apparent higher risk premium and general market sentiment, with the rest attributed to the link to oil prices, declining indigenous production on the UK Continental Shelf, and the cost of storage. The DTI has not made a specific assessment of who benefits from price increases because such an assessment would be necessarily complex and is likely to be quickly out of date.

Post Office Card Account

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many computer failures of the Citibank Post Office card account system there were in 2004; on which dates; and what measures are being taken to prevent such failures. [207977]

Mr. Sutcliffe *[holding answer 13 January 2005]*: The Department of Trade and Industry has no role in the operation of the Post Office card account, which is a commercial matter that falls within the day-to-day responsibility of Post Office Ltd. I have therefore asked the Chief Executive to reply direct to the hon. Member.

Stolen Property

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many civil servants from her Department have *(a)* faced disciplinary proceedings as a result of allegations of theft, *(b)* been charged with theft and *(c)* been dismissed following theft allegations in each year since 1997. [206405]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is as follows:

	2000	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
Staff facing disciplinary proceedings as a result of allegations of theft	2	3	3	1	0
Staff charged with disciplinary offences relating to allegations of theft	2	3	3	1	0
Staff dismissed following allegations relating to theft	2	2	2	1	0

Data prior to 2000 is not available. Detailed information on disciplinary cases is normally retained for a period of five years.

All DTI staff and staff working in DT Executive Agencies are responsible for familiarising themselves with the general standards of conduct set out in departmental guidance. Any breach of the principles of conduct may result in disciplinary action.

Any member of staff who is charged with a criminal offence, or is convicted of such an offence, must inform the Department as soon as possible.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH

Albania

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions his Department has had with the Albanian Government on provision of information to Albanian women who are considering offers of employment in the UK, with particular reference to the entertainment industry; and if he will make a statement. [208653]

Mr. MacShane: The UK is committed to combating the trafficking of women from Albania to the UK for prostitution. Both bilaterally, and through the European Union, we have repeatedly emphasised that one of the conditions for Albania's signature of a Stabilisation and Association Agreement with the European Union is progress in tackling organised crime, particularly human trafficking. When my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary met the Albanian Foreign Minister last February, he emphasised this and the need for urgent action.

The UK, both bilaterally and within the EU, is offering practical assistance in this area. We are funding vocational training for women in the North and shelters for trafficked women on the coast. We also fund a forensic policing unit in Tirana to provide evidence against the criminals. We contribute 19 per cent. (or £6 million annually) to the European Commission's CARDS assistance programme in Albania. This includes large police and customs assistance programmes to increase Albanian law enforcement capacity.

Burma

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what plans he has to raise the issue of atrocities against the *(a)* Karen, *(b)* Karenni and *(c)* Shan peoples of Burma at the United Nations Security Council. [207048]

Mr. Alexander: The UK works closely with its UN partners to promote political reform and full respect for human rights in Burma.

We have raised our concerns about the situation in Burma with our Security Council partners. However, there is no consensus at present to bring Burma before the Security Council.

Atrocities against ethnic groups in Burma have been condemned in successive UK co-sponsored UN Resolutions on Burma.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Burmese regime regarding the attack by the Burmese Army against Karen villages in Hsaw Htee Township, Nyaunglebin District, Karen State, on 14 November; and if he will make a statement. [207050]

Mr. Alexander: We are aware of the report of this attack provided by the Free Burma Rangers, which has been highlighted by Christian Solidarity Worldwide. We have not made representations to the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) about this specific attack. However, the Burmese regime is well aware of our concern about human rights abuses in ethnic minority areas. We are particularly concerned that offensives continue in Karen State despite the ongoing cease-fire talks with the Karen National Union (KNU).

Human rights violations suffered by persons belonging to ethnic groups have been highlighted by successive highly critical UK and EU co-sponsored UN Resolutions.

Anne Picking: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment has been made of the merits of appointing an EU special envoy to Burma. [207746]

Mr. MacShane: We fully support the existing envoys: the UN Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in Burma, Professor Sergio Pinheiro, and the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative, Tan Sri Razali Ismail. These representatives speak for the international community as a whole and we would not wish to do anything that deflected attention from their efforts.

We urge the Burmese regime to allow them to return to Burma. They have a crucial role to play.

Consultants

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs which consultant organisations are undertaking work for his Department; what the title of each project is; what the cost is of each project; and on what date each tender was awarded. [207218]

Mr. Rammell *[holding answer 13 January 2005]*: Due to the large number of consultants involved and because the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) does not hold centrally details on all of the consultant organisations that it employs to undertake work on its behalf, information could only be provided at disproportionate cost. However, I have placed in the Library of the House details of the consultant organisations currently working on FCO administration work and capital projects. I also refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Buckingham (Mr. Bercow) on 13 December 2004 (*Official Report*, column 895W).

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much the Department spent on first-class travel in each year since 1997. [206572]

Mr. Alexander: First class travel costs are not readily identifiable from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's (FCO) accounting system and the information requested could be provided only at disproportionate cost. The FCO's general policy is as follows:

> Rail travel in the UK(staff above the grade of C4 or C5 are entitled to first class travel;
>
> Air travel (staff of the rank of permanent secretary are entitled to first class travel on flights over three hours. Certain other members of staff may also qualify where there are operational reasons.

Disabled Staff

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many of the staff employed by his Department have a declared disability. [205860]

Mr. Alexander: The Cabinet Office collects and publishes annually statistical information on the Civil Service by Department. These include data on the number of staff who have a declared disability.

The latest information, at April 2004, is available in the Library of the House and also on the Civil Service website at the following addresses.

http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management_information/statistical_information/statistics/publications/xls/gender_apr04_4nov04.xls

http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management_information/statistical_information/statistics/publications/xls/disability_apr04_4nov04.xls

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) currently has 120 officers who have declared a disability.

We are working in a variety of ways to improve the diversity of the FCO's staff, including increasing the number of officers with declared disabilities. These include a positive action workshop for disabled staff, guidance for all staff on disability and reasonable adjustments, monitoring of our promotion procedures, a Board disability champion, a disability advisory group and staff network, and the requirement for all staff to have diversity training and objectives.

Euro Group

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the significance, in the protocol on the Euro Group in the EU Constitution, of the expression pending the Euro becoming the currency of all member states of the Union; and what representations the Government made on this matter during the negotiations. [207135]

Mr. Timms: I have been asked to reply.

This protocol does not apply to the UK unless it decides to join the euro. The separate status of the United Kingdom is dealt with in Protocol 13 of the Constitution. This carries forward the existing terms of the UK's opt-out from the euro and economic and monetary union, set out in the protocol annexed to the treaty establishing the European Community by the Maastricht treaty on European Union.

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the legal status of reference to the development of ever-closer co-ordination of economic policies within the euro area in the protocol on the Euro Group of the EU Constitution. [207281]

Mr. Timms: I have been asked to reply.

This reference forms part of the preamble to the protocol on the Euro Group: it therefore has no substantive legal effect, but contributes to the context for interpretation of the protocol. This protocol does not apply to the UK unless it decides to join the euro.

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the *(a)* role, *(b)* office and *(c)* duties, of the Presidency of the Euro Zone countries, under the Protocol on the Euro Group in the draft EU Constitution. [207101]

Mr. Timms: I have been asked to reply.

The internal management of the Euro Group, including defining the role, office and duties of its President, will be a matter for the members of the Euro Group to determine. Under the draft EU Constitution, decisions would continue to be taken by all member states within ECOFIN where an issue affects the economic interests of all member states.

European Constitution

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list UK Government amendments proposed to the European Constitution that were rejected. [207079]

Mr. MacShane: Formal amendments to the Convention's draft during the Intergovernmental Conference were proposed by the Italian and Irish Presidencies rather than individual member states. I refer the hon. Member to the reply my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary gave to the right hon. Member for Wokingham (Mr. Redwood) on 7 July 2004, *Official Report*, column 767W, setting out the Government's position regarding these amendments.

John Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he plans to publish the regulatory impact assessment for the bill to give effect to the Constitutional Treaty for the European Union subject to a referendum. [208550]

Mr. MacShane: It is the Government's intention to publish a regulatory impact assessment on the EU Bill when it is introduced to Parliament.

John Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) how much the Government plans to spend on information regarding the Constitutional Treaty for the European Union prior to the proposed referendum; [208553]

(2) what his Department is planning to spend on providing public information regarding the Constitutional Treaty for the European Union in advance of and during the proposed referendum. [208565]

Mr. MacShane: For financial year 2004–05 the Foreign and Commonwealth Office budget for informing the public about the EU, including about the proposed EU Constitutional Treaty, is £613,000.

No budget has yet been allocated for the next financial year and a date has not yet been set for a referendum.

John Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he intends to distribute a copy of the Constitutional Treaty for the European Union to every household. [208566]

Mr. MacShane: There are no current plans for such a distribution.

European Union

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the United Kingdom's territorial cohesion with other EU member states, referred to in article 1–3(3) of the proposed EU Constitution. [208084]

Mr. MacShane: The reference to territorial cohesion in Article 1–3(3) of the Constitutional Treaty should be understood in the context of Articles III-220 to III-224 of the treaty. These Articles envisage Union action for the strengthening of its economic, social and territorial cohesion in particular aimed at reducing disparities between the levels of development of various regions and the backwardness of the least favoured regions. They are in substance the same as Title XVII of the treaty establishing the European Communities, which deals with economic and social cohesion and derive from the 1993 Maastricht Treaty on European Union.

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will define the principle of sincere co-operation referred to in article 1–5(2) of the proposed EU Constitution. [208086]

Mr. MacShane: The principle of sincere co-operation is a general principle of EU law which has been reflected in the treaties since the creation of the Communities (see for example Article 5 EC Treaty). Its general meaning is that member states must in good faith facilitate and not undermine the tasks that they have agreed for the EU.

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs under what circumstances discrimination on the grounds of nationality would be permissible under the proposed EU Constitution. [208087]

Mr. MacShane: Article 1–4(2) of the Constitutional Treaty (which is in substance identical to Article 12(1) of the treaty establishing the European Community) provides that within the scope of the Constitution, and without prejudice to any of its specific provisions, any discrimination on ground of nationality shall be prohibited. It is not possible to set out in the abstract the circumstances in which discrimination on grounds of nationality might fall within the exceptions permitted by EU law (whether under existing law or under the Constitutional Treaty). That would depend entirely on the facts of the case.

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what internal frontiers impede the creation of an area of freedom, security and justice as required by article 1–3 of the proposed EU Constitution. [208088]

Mr. MacShane: The creation of an area of freedom, security and justice without internal frontiers (as set out in Article 1–3 of the proposed EU Constitution) is one of the objectives of the European Union under existing treaties. It reflects articles in the treaty establishing the European Community (articles 14, 61 and 62).

The majority of member states participate in the full provisions of the Schengen 'acquis' which include the removal of internal frontier controls. The UK participates in the police and judicial co-operation provisions of the Schengen acquis but not those relating to borders, visas or the lifting of internal controls, and it has retained its frontier controls with other EU member states. The UK has been a key player in the field of justice and home affairs and, not withstanding its maintenance of border controls, contributes fully to the creation of an area of freedom, security and justice.

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the categories of persons belonging to minorities are, referred to in Article I-2 of the proposed EU Constitution. [208089]

Mr. MacShane: Article I-2 of the Constitutional Treaty refers, among other things, to

> "respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities".

Whether a person belonged to a particular minority for these purposes would depend on the circumstances.

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what his Department's understanding is of the term, open to all European states, in Article I-1 of the proposed EU Constitution; and which states are included in this definition. [208090]

Mr. MacShane: The section of Article I-1 referred to should be read in its entirety. It reads

> "The Union shall be open to all European States which respect its values and are committed to promoting them together".

This means that any European State may apply to join the Union and will be judged on the basis of whether it meets the stated requirements and against established criteria.

There is no exact definition of a European State. The four countries in the European Free Trade Area (ie Norway, Iceland, Switzerland and Liechtenstein) are clearly European. The Feira European Council in 2000 agreed that as well as the then candidates (Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey), Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia and the Union of Serbia and Montenegro are considered potential candidates. No decisions have been taken on the eligibility of other countries.

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether *(a)* the Welsh Assembly, *(b)* the Northern Ireland Executive and *(c)* the Scottish Parliament constitute regional parliaments for the purposes of Article 6 of the second protocol to the proposed EU constitution. [208258]

Mr. MacShane: Article 6 of Protocol 2 of the EU Constitutional Treaty states that

> "It will be for each national Parliament or each chamber of a national Parliament to consult, where appropriate, regional parliaments with legislative powers".

In the Government's view, this suggests, in the United Kingdom, the National Assembly for Wales, the Scottish Parliament, and the Northern Ireland Assembly (not the Executive). However, Article 6 makes clear that the nature and extent of consultation on the principle of subsidiarity is for national Parliaments to decide. The House of Lords European Union Committee and the Select Committee on the Modernisation of the House of Commons are currently examining how the subsidiarity early warning mechanism should operate.

Indonesia

Mr. Hancock: To what representations he has made to the Government of Indonesia regarding recent atrocities by the Indonesian military in Puncak Jaya, West Papua; and if he will make a statement. [207052]

Mr. Alexander: We are aware of reports of human rights abuses in Puncak Jaya, Papua, Indonesia. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary's Special Adviser, Dr. Michael Williams, visited Indonesia as a ministerial envoy in December 2004. He met the President, the Foreign Minister and other senior members of the Indonesian Government. The situation in Papua was discussed during these meetings. The British Embassy in Jakarta has also discussed these allegations with people in the area. According to their reports, there have been some problems but the situation has now calmed down.

The British Government welcome the high priority that the President of Indonesia, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, has attached to the resolution of conflict in Papua. We also welcome the Indonesian Foreign Minister's statement that their Government have endorsed a human rights plan of action covering the next five years.

Iraq

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the quality of the environment in Iraq *(a)* before the invasion by Coalition forces in March 2003 and *(b)* recently. [208371]

Mr. Rammell: It is not routine practice for the UK to carry out assessments of the quality of the environment in another country and no such assessment was carried out by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in Iraq prior to, or post March 2003.

The Department for International Development (DFID) is providing financial support to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) for post-conflict environmental assessment work in Iraq, which includes technical assistance and capacity building for the Iraqi Environment Ministry.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office is also providing financial support for a Liaison Officer for the Iraq Donors Group on the Marshlands and Environment Management, involving Iraq, UNEP and international donors.

New Eurasia Foundation

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what role the New Eurasia Foundation plays in fulfilling the policy objectives of his Department; and what funding the Department contributes to the New Eurasia Foundation. [207768]

Mr. Rammell: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) only funds those areas of work of the New Eurasia Foundation that assist us in meeting our departmental objectives. An example of this is their work in respect of the strengthening of civil society in Russia. In this connection the FCO is presently funding, with the sum of £130,000 over two financial years, one of their projects designed to strengthen the independence of selected newspapers in Russia's regions. This is the continuation of a project originally run by the Eurasia Foundation, one of the founding organisations of the New Eurasia Foundation.

In addition, the FCO continues to contribute to the Eurasia Foundation by supporting projects in Georgia and Central Asia with the sum of nearly £260,000. Unlike the New Eurasia Foundation that only operates in Russia, the Eurasia Foundation also works in other countries of the former Soviet Union.

Passports (Tsunami Survivors)

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many temporary passports were issued to British survivors of the recent tsunami. [208721]

Mr. Mullin: Up to 11 January 2005 our Consular Staff in Thailand issued 66 gratis Emergency Passports and 305 gratis restricted validity passports. They also issued approximately 200 facilitation letters in agreement with the Thai immigration authorities, to allow British nationals affected by the Tsunami to leave Thailand.

The British High Commission in Colombo has issued 17 full passports and two emergency passports to British Citizens in Sri Lanka who have been affected by the disaster. However, in order to facilitate the speedy return to the UK of stranded British Citizens, the British High Commission has worked in close co-operation with the UK and Sri Lankan Immigration Services, to arrange for confirmed British Citizens who had lost their passports as a result of the Tsunami to return to the UK without a passport.

Ramush Haradinaj

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what progress has been made with investigations into whether war crimes were committed by Mr. Ramush Haradinaj, prime minister of Kosovo. [208094]

Mr. MacShane: The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) is an independent institution established by the UN Security Council Resolution 827 (25 May, 1993). The Government are therefore not in a position to discuss on-going investigations nor possible future indictments in Kosovo or elsewhere.

Senior Staff (Women)

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many women there are in senior positions in his Department. [205861]

Mr. Alexander: The Cabinet Office collects and publishes annually statistical information on the civil service by Department. These include data on the number of women in senior positions in Departments.

The latest information, at April 2004, is available in the Library of the House and also on the civil service website at the following addresses.

http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management_information/statistical_information/statistics/publications/xls/gender_apr04_4nov04.xls.

http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management_information/statistical_information/statistics/publications/xls/disability_apr04_4nov04.xls

There are currently 69 women in senior positions in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

The number of women in senior positions has continued to rise steadily over the last five years. We are working to ensure that this trend continues. We have in place a range of measures to promote greater gender diversity at senior levels, including positive action training for women, flexible working, monitoring of our promotion procedures, a board gender champion and gender advisory group, and the requirement for all staff to have diversity training and objectives.

Sri Lanka

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Government of Sri Lanka regarding *(a)* attacks against Sri Lankan Christians, with particular reference to recent attacks against (i) the Assemblies of God church in Yakkala and (ii) the Bethel Children's Home in Batticaloa and *(b)* the Sri Lankan Government's attempts to pass anti-conversion laws. [207054]

Mr. MacShane: We have not made specific representations to the Government of Sri Lanka regarding these particular attacks. On the issue of proposed legislation against 'forced conversion', our position remains, as my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary told his Sri Lankan counterpart in July last year, that we do not believe legislation is appropriate in this area. Instead we see inter-religious and inter-community dialogue as the best way to promote tolerance and co-operation in Sri Lanka. We will continue to monitor the situation closely, to maintain our contacts with all religious denominations and to raise our concerns with government ministers both bilaterally and with our EU partners.

Stolen Property

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many civil servants from his Department have *(a)* faced disciplinary proceedings as a result of allegations of theft, *(b)* been charged with theft and *(c)* been dismissed following theft allegations in each year since 1997. [206402]

Mr. MacShane: The information is as follows.

(a) One, in 2000.

(b) No staff have faced criminal charges relating to the theft of Foreign and Commonwealth Office property.

(c) No civil servants were dismissed for theft.

Thailand

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will amend the advice offered by his Department to young travellers to Thailand to highlight the threat posed by lawlessness. [207703]

Mr. MacShane *[holding answer 11 January 2005]*: Foreign and Commonwealth Office Travel Advice is constantly monitored to ensure that it provides up-to-date information on the situation in countries overseas, enabling British nationals to make an informed decision on whether or not to travel to those countries.

This information is gained from a variety of sources that includes, but is not limited to, our overseas posts, intelligence sources, and the travel industry. Following careful assessment of information received, we make appropriate amendments to our Travel Advice as and when necessary.

UK Embassies

Sir Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) whether it is his Department's policy to downsize the commercial departments of UK embassies in European countries; what plans he has to close individual commercial departments; and if he will make a statement; [199938]

(2) what assessment he has made of the effect of downsizing the commercial departments of UK embassies on the export potential of British business and industry; [199940]

(3) what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry about the future of commercial departments in UK embassies in Europe; and if he will make a statement. [199941]

Mr. Alexander: UK Trade and Investment (UKTI) supports businesses in the UK seeking to compete internationally. UKTI brings together the overseas resources of the FCO together with the Department for Trade and Industry. UKTI has strong partnerships with Regional Development Agencies in England, and with the Devolved Administrations.

Commercial teams in British Embassies and Consulates are an integral part of UKTI's support for businesses. UKTI's settlement in the recent Spending Review requires it to move resources to support inward investment to the UK. UKTI is, at the same time, focussing resources overseas on markets where customer demand is highest and where Foreign and Commonwealth Office commercial teams make the greatest difference to UK businesses.

On changes to UK embassies, I refer the hon. Member to the written statement made by my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary on 15 December 2004, *Official Report*, columns 137–40WS.

The UKTI corporate strategy underpins the development of its support for British business. The strategy can be found on UKTI's website at www.uktradeinvest.gov.uk and has been placed in the Library of the House.

TREASURY

Child Trust Funds (Milton Keynes)

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many children are eligible for the Child Trust Fund in *(a)* Milton Keynes South West and *(b)* North East Milton Keynes. [208413]

Mr. Timms: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave on 30 November 2004, *Official Report*, columns 87–88W, to my hon. Friend the Member for Battersea (Martin Linton). There were 5,500 new births across Buckinghamshire in 2003.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much has been spent by his Department on *(a)* new furniture and *(b)* hired furniture in each year since 1997. [205617]

Mr. Timms: The totals spent on furniture by the core Treasury in 2002–03 and 2003–04 were £413,000 and £170,000 respectively. Furniture for long-term use within the Treasury offices is generally bought, rather than hired or leased. Information in respect of the earlier years could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Staff

John Mann: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what percentage of his Department's staff is based in London. [208040]

Mr. Timms: All Treasury staff are based in London.

European Union

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to his answer of 15 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1084W, on the European Union, if he will supply page and column numbers for references to the costs of activities promoting the benefits of the Government's policy towards the European Union, distinguishing EU policy communication themes from other such themes; and what the total amount spent on such activities was in the last year for which figures are available. [207107]

Mr. Timms: HM Treasury does not undertake promotion of the Government's policy towards the European Union as a discrete function, but only as part of its work in developing policy on individual issues.

Mr. Brady: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will rank EU member states showing which in his Department's assessment are closest to achieving a highly competitive social market economy as required by Article I–3(3) and I–3(4) of the proposed EU Constitution. [208251]

Mr. Timms: Article I–3 of the draft constitution sets out the Union's objective of achieving sustainable development based on a highly competitive social market economy. Member states are currently working towards this goal through the Lisbon process.

Measuring the extent to which member states have established highly competitive social market economies requires an assessment of performance against a range of structural economic indicators. The relative performance of member states against core structural indicators was set out in the report from the Commission to the spring European Council, "Delivering Lisbon Reforms For The Enlarged Union", and in the EPC's annual report on structural reforms 2004, "Reinforcing Implementation". 2005 updates of these reports will be published in the coming weeks. The November 2004 report of the High-level Group chaired by Wim Kok, "Facing the Challenge", also included an assessment of member states' relative performance against a series of key structural indicators, showing both achievements in absolute terms and the relative improvements in performance over time.

Mr. Brady: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what structures and mechanisms he *(a)* has put in place and *(b)* proposes to ensure the co-ordination of UK economic and employment policies with those of other EU member states as proposed in Article 1–15 (1) and (2) of the proposed EU Constitution. [208257]

Mr. Timms: Articles 1–12 and 15 of the EU Constitution maintain member states' ability to coordinate their economic and employment policies within the existing framework of the broad economic policy guidelines and employment guidelines, as set out in the relevant sections of Part III of the Constitution.

Mr. Brady: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of whether Article 1–8 of the proposed EU constitution gives rise to a legal obligation for all EU citizens and commercial entities to treat the euro as legal tender. [208259]

Mr. Timms: The separate status of the United Kingdom is dealt with in Protocol 13 of the Constitution. This carries forward the existing terms of the UK's opt-out from the euro and economic and monetary union, set out in the Protocol annexed to the Treaty establishing the European Community by the Maastricht Treaty on European Union.

Foreign Students

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his most recent estimate is of the yearly contribution to the economy in *(a)* Greater Portsmouth and *(b)* the UK of foreign students in the higher, further and private education sectors; what amount of that contribution is represented by (i) spending and (ii) numbers directly employed as a result; and if he will make a statement. [208337]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Mike Hancock, dated 17 January 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent question concerning what the most recent estimate is of the yearly contribution to the economy in *(a)* Greater Portsmouth and *(b)* the UK of foreign students in the higher, further and private education sectors; what amount of that contribution is represented by (i) spending and (ii) numbers directly employed as a result (208337)

The most recent estimate of the contribution to the economy as measured using gross value added for Portsmouth is £3.3 billion out of a total for the whole economy of £926.3 billion for the year 2002. This represents a contribution to the UK economy of 0.4 per cent. No estimate is made of the contribution to this figure from the education sector.

The most recent estimate of the contribution to the economy of foreign students in the UK using the expenditure measure of Gross Domestic Product is £2.9 billion out of a total of £1,044.1 billion in the year 2003. This represents a contribution to the UK economy of 0.3 per cent. This covers higher, further and private education sectors and the split by these categories is not available.

The numbers directly employed as a result are not available.

Inflation

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the estimated *(a)* retail price index, *(b)* RPIX and *(c)* CPI rate of inflation is for financial years (i) 2004–05 and (ii) 2005–06. [207952]

Mr. Timms: The forecasts for the Retail Prices Index and CPI inflation are as set out in Annex B, Table B3 of the pre-Budget report published in December 2004. RPIX inflation is forecast to be 2¼ per cent in 2004–05 and 2½ per cent. in 2005–06.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the *(a)* retail price index, *(b)* RPIX and *(c)* CPI measures of inflation were in each financial year from 1996–97 to 2003–04 inclusive. [207953]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mrs. Caroline Spelman, dated 17 January 2005:

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking what the Retail Prices Index (RPI), Retail Prices Index excluding mortgage interest payments (RPIX) and Consumer Prices Index (CPI) were in each financial year from 1996–97 to 2003–04 inclusive. (207953)

The data requested is given in the attached table.

RPI, RPIX and CPI financial year inflation rates (percentage)[1] *1996–97 to 2003–04*

Financial year	*RPI*	*RPIX*	*CPI*[2]
1996–97	2.4	3.0	2.3
1997–98	3.3	2.7	1.7
1998–99	3.1	2.7	1.6
1999–2000	1.6	2.2	1.2
2000–01	2.9	2.0	0.9
2001–02	1.5	2.3	1.3
2002–03	2.1	2.3	1.3
2003–04	2.8	2.7	1.3

[1] Financial year percentage changes are derived from financial year indices, which were computed using an average of monthly indices (April to March inclusive).

[2] Official figures for the CPI index level are available from January 1996. CPI index levels prior to January 1996 are estimated, as described in O'Donoghue, J. (1998) 'Harmonised index of consumer prices: historical estimates', Economic Trends No.541, December 1998, www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/article.asp?ID=31

Source:

Office for National Statistics

IT Procurement

Dr. Pugh: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what procurement policies the Government has in place to prevent rapid obsolescence of its IT equipment and software. [207884]

Mr. Boateng: The Office of Government Commerce has in place a Memorandum of Understanding with Microsoft, which entitles Government Departments to take advantage of an attractive package for Microsoft software including options for upgrading to new versions of its operating system software. The Office of Government Commerce also provides other mechanisms for Government to gain the best value for money from IT goods and services.

Mortgage Income Tax Relief

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the cost to public funds was of providing mortgage income tax relief in each year from 1995–96 until its abolition. [207954]

Dawn Primarolo: Please refer to Table 2.9: Income tax credits and repayments (1,2,3,4): analysis by type 1994–95 to 2003–04 on the Inland Revenue website. This gives the amount of MIRAS relief from 1994–95 to 2003–04.

MIRAS was abolished in April 2000.

Ovarian Cancer

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the most recent figures are for survival rates for ovarian cancer in the UK. [208363]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Dr. Ian Gibson, dated 17 January 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent question concerning the most recent figures for survival rates for ovarian cancer in the UK. (208363)

Survival figures for the UK as a whole are not currently available. The latest available one- and five-year survival rates for ovarian cancer in England and Wales are for adult patients (aged 15–99 years) diagnosed during 1996–99 and followed up to 31 December 2001. These figures are given in the table below.

	One- and five-year age-standardised[1] relative survival rates (Percentage) for adult patients (aged 15–99 years) diagnosed with ovarian cancer during 1996–99[2], England and Wales
Number of patients[3]	20,177
One-year Survival (Percentage)	65
Five-year Survival (Percentage)	36

[1] As cancer survival varies with age at diagnosis, rates have been age standardised (directly age standardised to the 1986–90 cancer patients population) to control for changes in the age profile of cancer patients over time.

[2] Complete five-year follow-up is currently only available for those diagnosed in 1996. For patients diagnosed in later years the most up-to-date estimates of shorter-term survival were used in this analysis of survival rates.

[3] Eligible patients included in the survival analysis. The criteria for excluding patient records are given in Health Statistics Quarterly 2000; 6: 71–80, for example where the registration was of a second (different) primary cancer: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_health/HSQ6Book.pdf

Source:

Office for National Statistics.

Available on the National Statistics website: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/ssdataset.asp?vlnk = 7899

The latest survival rates for ovarian cancer in Scotland are available on the Scottish Cancer Registry, Information and Statistics Division Scotland website:

http://www.isdscotland.org/isd/info3.jsp?pContentID = 1430&p_applic = CCC&p_service = Content.show&

Figures for Northern Ireland are available on the Northern Ireland Cancer Registry website: http://www.qub.ac.uk/nicr/statspages/newtables/SurvivalStats/Ovary-Surv.html

Pensioner Household Statistics

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many *(a)* single occupied pensioner households and *(b)* households occupied by two pensioners there are in each constituency. [207960]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mrs. Caroline Spelman, dated 17 January 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent question asking how many *(a)* single occupied pensioners households and *(b)* households occupied by two pensioner there are in each constituency. (207960)

The number of one person pensioner households in each Parliamentary Constituency in England and Wales on Census day (29 April 2001) is available in table KS20 on the CD supplement to the "Census 2001 Report for Parliamentary Constituencies", which is available in the House of Commons Library.

Specially commissioned table C0407 has been run to identify the number of households occupied by two pensioners in each Parliamentary Constituency in England and Wales on Census day (29 April 2001). This has been placed in the House of Commons Library and can also be accessed on the National Statistics website at http://www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/op15.asp.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many households in England with two or more adults contain at least one pensioner but are not solely comprised of pensioners. [207961]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mrs. Caroline Spelman, dated 17 January 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent question asking how many households in England with two or more adults, contain at least one pensioner, but are not solely comprised of pensioners. (207961)

The table below shows the number of households in England on Census day (29 April 2001), which contained one or more pensioners living with one or more non-pensioners. The figures have been extracted from Table T06 on the CD supplement to the "Census 2001 National Report for England and Wales", which is available in the House of Commons Library.

All households with at least one person of pensionable age

Area	*One or more pensioners[1] with one or more non-pensioners*
England	1,606,782

[1] Pensionable age is 65 and over for males and 60 and over for females

Source:

"Table T062001 Census National Report for England and Wales"

Sniffer Dogs

Lynne Jones: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many sniffer dogs have been used by Customs and Excise in each of the last five years; and how many of these animals have died prematurely while in service. [208245]

Dawn Primarolo: HM Customs and Excise places a high value on the welfare of its detector dogs. Over the last five years, five dogs in total have died. The information requested for each of the years, ending on 31 March is as follows.

Year (ending 31 March)	*Total dogs in service*	*Number of dogs dying*
2000	Not available	1
2001	Not available	0
2002	54	1
2003	51	0
2004	54	1
2005 (April to December 2004)	59	2

Tax Credits

Miss Begg: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what IT errors have led to tax credits overpayments, broken down by type of overpayment; whether the overpayments were discovered in-year; and whether in-year recovery of overpayments has been made. [206259]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given on 30 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 102W, to the hon. Member for Weston-Super-Mare (Brian Cotter)

Simon Hughes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many cases of overpayment for child and working tax credit there have been for each of the last five calendar years in *(a)* North Southwark and Bermondsey, *(b)* Camberwell and Peckham and *(c)* Dulwich and West Norwood; and if he will make a statement. [207897]

Dawn Primarolo: For working tax credit and child tax credit, I refer the hon. Member to my reply on 15 November 2004, *Official Report*, columns 946–48W to the hon. Members for Northavon (Mr. Webb) and for Yeovil (Mr. Laws).

For working families' and disabled person's tax credits, I refer the hon. Member to my answer on 12 November 2003, *Official Report*, column 394W, to the hon. Member for Eddisbury (Mr. O'Brien).

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent research he has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated on the effect of the withdrawal of the Fareshare funding category of the Landfill Tax Credit Scheme; and if he will make a statement. [208349]

John Healey: Fareshare has not been withdrawn from the Landfill Tax Credit Scheme, but is no longer eligible for LTCS funding following the reform of the scheme from 2003.

From 1 April 2003, landfill site operators can no longer claim a tax credit for contributions to projects under categories C and CC, which dealt with sustainable waste management. Sustainable waste management projects are now funded through a public expenditure programme (Waste Implementation Programme) administered by Defra to ensure that legally binding targets to significantly reduce the amount of biodegradable municipal waste sent to landfill are met.

There has been no recent research commissioned on the impact of removing the C and CC categories from the Landfill Tax Credit Scheme. Progress by the Waste implementation programme is demonstrated in improvements on all waste indicators.

Tax Returns

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the latest figures are for the take up of online submission of personal tax returns; and what steps he has taken to evaluate consumer satisfaction with the process. [208486]

Dawn Primarolo: The Inland Revenue received 1,011,183 returns electronically in the period 6 April 2004 to 7 January 2005. 787,978 were received via the internet service and 223,205 via the Electronic Lodgement Service.

Users of the Revenue's own online filing software are asked to provide feedback via an online survey. Current satisfaction rating is running at 91 per cent. with over 96 per cent. of users saying they will use the service again next year.

In addition we have a rolling programme of research with taxpayers on their usage of our online services which will be extended to agents next year. We also continually monitor feedback based on calls received at our online services helpdesk.

Teenage Pregnancy

Simon Hughes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the teenage pregnancy rate in North Southwark and Bermondsey was in each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [207899]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Simon Hughes, dated 17 January 2005:

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your recent question asking, what the teenage pregnancy rate in North Southwark and Bermondsey was in each year since 1997. (207899)

The number of teenage conceptions that occurred in 2000 in North Southwark and Bermondsey Parliamentary Constituency was 122. Figures are not available by Parliamentary Constituencies for other years. Figures are available for each year to 2002 for local authority and health authority areas. These can be found on the Office for National Statistics at:

http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_health/HSQ24.pdf

http://www.statistics.gov.uk/CCI/nscl.asp?ID = 7453

Rates cannot be supplied for 2000, as population estimates by Parliamentary Constituencies are not available for that year.

Aggregates Levy

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when HM Customs and Excise is expected to complete its assessment of the impact of the introduction of the aggregates levy. [209144]

John Healey: The process of evaluating taxes is a continuing one with regular updates provided as part of the Budget process. As announced at the pre-Budget report, we plan to publish a stock-take of the impact of the introduction of all environmental taxes at Budget 2005. The aggregates levy will make up part of this assessment.

Corporation Tax

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much corporation tax has been raised from *(a)* national governing bodies for sport and *(b)* international sporting headquarters based in the UK in each year since 1997. [209129]

Dawn Primarolo: The information is not available at the level of detail requested.

Council Tax

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many dwellings in England are in council tax bands *(a)* A, *(b)* B, *(c)* G and *(d)* H. [208688]

Dawn Primarolo: As at 25 October, the last time national statistics were compiled by the Valuation Office Agency, the number of dwellings in England for the following council tax bands was:

Council tax band	*Number*
A	5,569,151
B	4,203,705
G	780,128
H	121,525

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer how many properties are listed by the Valuation Office Agency as having a band review pending. [208757]

Dawn Primarolo: As at 31 December 2004 the Valuation Office Agency has 49,361 properties pending a council tax band review.

Debt/Incomes

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the average *(a)* unsecured debt per person and *(b)* annual income per person was in each year since 1997. [208525]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Dr. Vincent Cable, dated 17 January 2004:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question on unsecured debt per person and annual income per person. (208525)

The information requested is shown in the attached table. The data for unsecured debt (households' total financial liabilities other than secured debt) and income (households' gross disposable income) used in the calculations are national accounts series for the combined household and non-profit institutions serving households (NPISH) sectors. The accounts for the household and NPISH sectors are currently combined; separate estimates are not available.

For the denominator in the calculations the series used is Population aged 16+.

£

	Annual income per person	*Unsecured debt per person*
1997	12,420	3,540
1998	12,730	3,790
1999	13,310	4,090
2000	14,200	4,460
2001	15,120	4,910
2002	15,470	5,620
2003	16,050	6,100

GDP (Underground Activity)

Keith Vaz: To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer what percentage of the recorded gross domestic product in the UK is estimated to be generated by underground activity. [209142]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Keith Vaz, dated 17 January 2005:

As National Statisician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking what percentage of the recorded Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the UK is estimated to be generated by underground activity.(209142)

The Office for National Statistics does not make an estimate of the proportion of GDP generated by underground activity.

Government Van Requirements

Mr. Byrne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimates the Office of Government Commerce has made of government requirements for new light vans in *(a)* 2004–05, *(b)* 2005–06 and *(c)* 2006–07; and if he will make a statement. [208782]

Mr. Boateng: The Office of Government Commerce is not responsible for making estimates of government requirements on new light vans.

Iraq

Harry Cohen: To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer what the Paris Club at its recent deliberations on Iraqi debt considered to be the amount of interest accumulated to that debt by individual countries; what the total estimated interest is on Iraq's debt; what the level of debt would be if interest is excluded; what the average period of time is that the interest has been accumulating; how much debt and interest Iraq owes to *(a)* the UK, *(b)* Saudi Arabia and *(c)* Kuwait; and if he will make a statement. [208733]

Mr. Timms: No debts have formally been reconciled between the Government of Iraq and its creditors. On the basis of creditor estimates, the Paris Club agreement of November 2004 applies to $38.9 billion, of which approximately half is interest. Iraq's total debt is estimated to be $124 billion. For the UK, the total amount owed to ECGD (which is the only debt owed by Iraq to HM Government) is estimated to be £595.8 million in Principal and £541.8 million in Moratorium Interest The average length of time that this interest has accumulated over is 14 years. HM Government have no information on the debts owed to Saudi Arabia or Kuwait.

Ministerial Cars

Mr. Byrne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer which manufacturers have been selected to supply cars for the ministerial car pool over the last 12 months; and what are the volumes of vehicles which have been contracted for. [208781]

Mr. Boateng: The Office of Government Commerce is not responsible for the selection of manufacturers for the ministerial car pool and does not hold information on the volumes of vehicles, which have been contracted for.

Parking Spaces

John Mann: To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer how many car parking spaces are provided for those *(a)* working in and *(b)* visiting his Department. [208939]

Mr. Timms: The Treasury building at 1 Horse Guards road has 25 car parking spaces.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his latest estimate is of the cost of answering *(a)* an oral and *(b)* a written parliamentary question. [208695]

Mr. Timms: As at April 2004, the average costs of answering an oral parliamentary question and a written parliamentary question were £345 and £148 respectively.

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the total cost in each of the last 10 years of answering parliamentary questions. [208696]

Mr. Timms: The information requested in respect of House of Commons questions for each of the last 10 parliamentary sessions is given in the following table:

£

	Oral question			*Written question*			
	Number	*Average cost*	*Total*	*Number*	*Average cost*	*Total*	*Sessional total*
1994–95	4,903	230	1,127,690	44,924	99	4,447,476	5,575,166
1995–96	4,464	244	1,089,216	35,843	105	3,763,515	4,852,731
1996–97	2,622	249	652,878	18,439	107	1,972,973	2,625,851
1997–98	8,113	260	2,109,380	52,652	112	5,897,024	8,006,404
1998–99	5,008	267	1,337,136	32,149	115	3,697,135	5,034,271
1999–2000	5,747	282	1,620,654	36,781	121	4,450,501	6,071,155
2000–01	2,780	285	792,300	16,716	123	2,056,068	2,848,368
2001–02	6,528	299	1,951,872	72,905	129	9,404,745	11,356,617
2002–03	4,118	313	1,288,934	55,436	135	7,483,860	8,772,794
2003–04	3,687	322	1,187,214	54,875	138	7,572,750	8,759,964
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	63,903,321

Secondments

Alan Simpson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list the people working within his Department on secondment from the private sector, broken down by *(a)* the organisation or industry they came from and *(b)* the policy responsibilities they have been given. [208632]

Mr. Timms: The following table gives details of the people on secondment to the Treasury from the private sector and their responsibilities.

Name	*Organisation*	*Policy responsibility*
Richard Abadie	PWC	Senior advisor on corporate and private finance projects
Charlotte Armstrong	Deloitte	Business tax specialist
Elizabeth Corrin	PKF	Accountancy support to financial reviews announced by the Chancellor
Caroline Cowan	Deloitte	VAT policy advisor
Daniel Daniels	Partnerships UK	Consultancy advice on PFI projects
Duncan Farrow Smith	Deloitte	Corporate finance adviser
Richard Weaver	PWC	Accountancy specialist for prospectus directive implementation

Details of all secondees are a matter of public record and full details are available on the Treasury's public website and can be found at: www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/about/about_secondee.cfm

Software Procurement

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer which Government Departments and agencies currently use open source software procurement; and what the total value was of open source software procured by Government in 2004. [208614]

Mr. Boateng: The information is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Stamp Duty

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the revenue implications of restructuring stamp duty on residential property sales to charge marginal rates of *(a)* 0 per cent. on property sales of £60,000 or less, 1 per cent. on sales between £60,000 and £249,999, 3 per cent. on sales between £250,000 and £499,999 and 4 per cent. on sales of £500,000 and above, *(b)* 0 per cent. on property sales of £60,000 or less, 2 per cent. on sales between £60,000 and £249,999, 3 per cent. on sales between £250,000 and £499,999 and 4 per cent. on sales of £500,000 and above, *(c)* 0 per cent. on property sales up to £100,000, 1 per cent. on sales between £100,000 and £249,999, 3 per cent. on sales between £250,000 and £499,999 and 4 per cent. on sales of £500,000 and above, *(d)* 0 per cent. on property sales up to £120,000, 1 per cent. on sales between £120,000 and £249,999, 3 per cent. on sales between £250,000 and £499,999 and 4 per cent. on sales of £500,000 or above, *(e)* 0 per cent. on property sales up to £120,000, 2 per cent. on sales between £120,000 and £249,999, 3 per cent. on sales between £250,000 and £499,999 and 4 per cent. on sales of £500,000 or above and *(f)* 0 per cent. on property sales up to £120,000, 2 per cent. on sales between £120,000 and £249,999, 3 per cent. on sales between £249,999 and £499,999 and 5 per cent. on sales of £500,000 or above. [208526]

Mr. Timms: The estimated revenue cost, in 2005–06, of restructuring stamp duty on residential property sales according to the six schemes described in the question is given in the tables:

Price of residential property (£)	*Marginal rates* *Tax regime 1*	 *Tax regime 2*
0–59,999	0%	0%
60,000–249,999	1%	2%
250,000–499,999	3%	3%
500,000 and above	4%	4%
Revenue cost (£m)	2,330	1,080

Price of residential property (£)	*Marginal rates Tax regime 3*
0–99,999	0%
100,000–249,999	1%
250,000–499,999	3%
500,000 and above	4%
Revenue cost (£m)	2,760

Price of residential property (£)	*Marginal rates* *Tax regime 4*	 *Tax regime 5*	 *Tax regime 6*
0–119,999	0%	0%	0%
120,000–249,999	1%	2%	2%
250,000–499,999	3%	3%	3%
500,000 and above	4%	4%	5%
Revenue cost (£m)	2,940	2,290	2,130

This does not include any allowance for behavioural changes and changes to reliefs.

Tax Credits

Harry Cohen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the number of people in the Leyton and Wanstead constituency who have benefited from tax credits; and if he will break that estimate down by *(a)* category of tax credit and *(b)* average amount received in each category. [208772]

Dawn Primarolo: Estimates of the number of in-work families receiving tax credits in each constituency (broken down by families with and without children) appear in "Child and Working Tax Credit Statistics. Geographical analyses. January 2004." This can be found on the Inland Revenue website at www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/stats/personal-tax-credits/menu.htm. The estimates are based on a sample of cases, and are subject to sampling uncertainty.

Information on the average value of tax credit awards is not currently available.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Veterans Reunited

14. **Mr. Bailey**: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on the promotion of lottery funding for Veterans Reunited activity. [208462]

Estelle Morris: Under the Big Lottery Fund's Veterans Reunited initiative, £27.3 million of Lottery money is being made available to ensure that all generations of UK residents can commemorate the momentous events that led to the end of the Second World War. Over £17.2 million has already been awarded and grants will continue to be made until the end of 2005. The initiative has been actively promoted, receiving wide press and media coverage.

Regional Programming

16. **Linda Gilroy**: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what steps the Government are taking to ensure that regional programmes are well represented in independent television schedules. [208464]

Tessa Jowell: The Government remain committed to retaining a strong regional dimension to public service broadcasting and this is reflected in the provisions of the Communications Act 2003.

It is for the regulator, Ofcom, to determine how the statutory obligations are best met.

Public Service Broadcasting

17. **Mr. Ian Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on her policy towards public service broadcasting. [208465]

Tessa Jowell: This Government remains committed to Public Service Broadcasting, delivered by a plurality of broadcasters.

Ofcom is currently reviewing Public Service Television Broadcasting with the aim of maintaining and strengthening its quality, as required under the Communications Act. This review will make an important contribution to the debate about the future of Public Service Broadcasting and I look forward to the publication of Ofcom's final conclusions.

Tourism

18. **Mr. Sanders:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on Government support for tourism. [208466]

Mr. Caborn: I am pleased to announce that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has decided to increase VisitBritain's grant in aid funding by a total of £2 million over the period from 2005–06 to 2007–08. This is a good settlement for VisitBritain and demonstrates the Government's commitment to the wider tourism sector, which received an estimated total of £285 million in public funding across the United Kingdom in 2003–04.

Heritage Funding

19. **Mr. Greenway:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sportwhat recent meetings her Department has had with English Heritage to discuss funding for heritage. [208467]

Estelle Morris: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State met English Heritage's Chairman on 6 December 2004 to discuss funding for heritage. The Minister for Media and Heritage and DCMS officials also have regular meetings with English Heritage to discuss funding issues.

National Lottery

20. **Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport whether it is her policy to maintain the principle of additionality in the allocation of national lottery money to good causes. [208468]

Estelle Morris: This Government remain committed to the principle of additionality—that lottery money should add to, and not substitute for, services already provided by the Government.

BBC

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what action she will take to meet considerations of taste and decency in the context of BBC charter renewal. [208460]

Estelle Morris: As I said in my earlier reply to the hon. Member for South-West Bedfordshire (Andrew Selous), all aspects of the BBC's organisation, operation, funding and Governance are being considered as part of the on-going BBC Charter Review, and the mechanisms for securing appropriate programme standards come within the scope of that Review.

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what discussions she has had with regulatory bodies regarding the screening on terrestrial television of allegedly blasphemous material. [208421]

Estelle Morris: None. Responsibility for what is broadcast on television and radio rests with the broadcasters and the organisations which regulate broadcasting—the Office of Communications (OFCOM), the Governors of the BBC and the Welsh Fourth Channel Authority (S4C). They are independent of the Government and responsible for safeguarding the public interest in broadcasting in accordance with the duties laid upon them. They set the detailed rules and guidance with which broadcasters must comply. It is a long-standing principle that the Government does not interfere in editorial matters, either in relation to scheduling or content.

Church Building Grants

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what consultations she has had with church authorities about the effect on Heritage Lottery grants to church buildings of relevant provisions in the National Lottery Bill; and if she will make a statement. [207912]

Estelle Morris: We have had no consultation with church authorities about the National Lottery Bill, but have received written representations from a number of Diocesan Advisory Committees, and others, concerning how clauses 7 and 8 of the Bill may affect Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) grants to church buildings. We have been in close contact with HLF to address their concerns and have made assurances both to them and the correspondents that there is no question whatsoever of reallocating balances in the National Lottery Distribution Fund in a way that would endanger the commitments made to existing heritage projects. We have also made clear that, if Parliament approves these powers, we would ensure that any money reallocated would still go to heritage projects but would be allocated to a different distributor. We will set out the Government's position more fully when the Bill is considered by the House.

Digital Broadcasting

Mr. McLoughlin: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the coverage is in England for digital television provided by the BBC. [208463]

Tessa Jowell: The vast majority of households in England can, with the appropriate equipment, receive the BBC digital services via either digital satellite, digital terrestrial or cable. However at least 20 per cent. of households cannot currently receive the BBC services via digital terrestrial television; this figure cannot be increased before switchover.

Film Distribution

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will take steps to encourage greater competition in the UK film distribution industry; and if she will make a statement. [208311]

Estelle Morris: The Government aim, through the UK Film Council (UKFC), to promote the availability of the widest possible variety of films to the widest possible audience. The UKFC's initiatives in this area do not directly address the issue of competition in the market place, but do account for it within the broader objective of improving variety and accessibility. The £2 million available annually through the Prints and Advertising Fund is designed, for example, to encourage film distributors to acquire more specialised films and to release them more widely. The UK Film Council is separately in constant dialogue with both individual distributors and relevant trade organisations to ensure that any structural or competition issues are dealt with appropriately.

Film Industry

Mr. David Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what support the Government is offering the UK film industry. [208455]

Estelle Morris: The Government is committed to creating a sustainable, stable and successful film industry. The UK Film Council, our strategic body for film, allocates Lottery money for film-making, and works with Government support to promote the widest possible enjoyment and understanding of cinema throughout the UK. The Government itself continues to make available generous and appropriately-targeted tax relief for filmmakers, and is working to create the best possible framework for increased and improved co-productions between UK filmmakers and their counterparts abroad.

Football Club Debts

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assessment she has made of the consequences for public policy making of the debts of UK professional football clubs; and what estimate she has made of the total debt level of professional football clubs. [207880]

Mr. Caborn: Deloitte's Annual Review of Football Finance, published in August 2004, estimates that the net debt of Premiership clubs was £704 million and the total borrowing of Division One clubs was £281 million at the end of season 2002–03.

The Government continue to encourage and support the football authorities in ensuring excellence in the governance and financial management of football clubs. While there is a long way to go, there has been some encouraging progress, such as the work of the FA Financial Advisory Unit who provide advice and assistance to clubs to avoid running into serious financial difficulties.

However, each year the Premier League and its clubs redistribute almost £70 million to good causes and reach £3.7 million participants on community projects.

Live Music

Dr. Evan Harris: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on the state of live music in England and Wales. [208451]

Mr. Caborn: Last year's MORI research indicated there were an estimated 1.7 million live music events in England and Wales in the previous 12 months. The Government recognises the cultural and economic importance of a vibrant live music scene is committed to ensuring that live music of all genres flourishes. I am confident that the reforms included in the Licensing Act 2003, supplemented by the work of the Live Music Forum, will help live music continue to thrive.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Anderson Inquiry

Mrs. Browning: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs for what reason the Northumberland Trading Standards video of Burnside Farm at the time of the 2001 foot and mouth disease outbreak was not submitted to the Anderson Inquiry. [202764]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 6 December 2004]:* Defra has no record of being sent a copy of the video by Northumberland county council before February 2003. The report of the FMD 2001: Lessons to be Learned Inquiry, chaired by Dr. Iain Anderson, was published on 22 July 2002. The council did not release any copies of the video before the trial of Mr. Waugh in May 2002, after Dr. Anderson had stopped receiving evidence for his Lessons to be Learned Inquiry. Reports based on the eye witness evidence of Defra, Institute for Animal Health and local authority officials, who were present on Burnside Farm when the video was recorded, were submitted to the Anderson Inquiry.

Common Agricultural Policy

Sir Teddy Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what progress has been made on reform of the Common Agricultural Policy. [207867]

Alun Michael: The Government played a leading role in securing major reforms to the Common Agricultural Policy in 2003 and 2004. They break the link between the bulk of farm subsidy and levels of production, make subsidy dependent on meeting environmental and animal welfare standards, and redirect a greater proportion of EU subsidy to environmental and rural development schemes. As a result, the CAP will now be less environmentally damaging and trade distorting and enable farmers to become more market focused.

The Government welcomes EU plans for further reform of the sugar sector and the Rural Development Regulation and will be looking to maximise other opportunities to reform the CAP further.

Conferences

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many conferences were *(a)* attended by officials from her Department, *(b)* cancelled by and *(c)* facilitated by her Department in each year since 1997; and what the (i) cost to the Department and (ii) location was in each case. [205765]

Alun Michael: Conferences organised by the Communications Directorate of Defra in the last three years for which figures are available are as follows. The answer covers the time from the formation of the Department on the 8 June 2001 to 20 December 2004. Records of all conferences carried out by the Department are not held centrally and could be obtained only at a disproportionate cost.

£

Event name	*Cost*
2001	
Farm Business Recovery—July 2001, Scotch Corner	13,920
Farm Business Recovery—July 2001, Oakhampton	13,860
Farm Business Recovery—July 2001, Carlisle	14,095
Farm Business Recovery—July 2001, Darlington	14,045
Farm Business Recovery—August 2001, Carlisle	13,870
Farm Business Recovery—August 2001, Hexham	14,045
Farm Business Recovery—August 2001, Gloucester	13,860
Farm Business Recovery—August 2001, Bishop Auckland	14,045
Farm Business Recovery—August 2001, Penrith	13,870
Farm Business Recovery—August 2001, Stafford	13,860
Farm Business Recovery—August 2001, Bromsgrove	13,860

£

Event name	*Cost*
Farm Business Recovery—August 2001, Barnstable	13,860
Farm Business Recovery—August 2001, Broughtone	13,870
Farm Business Recovery—August 2001, Hereford	14,170
Farm Business Recovery—August 2001, Skipton	14,045
Farm Business Recovery—August 2001, Carlisle	13,870
Farm Business Recovery—August 2001, Penrith	13,870
Farm Business Recovery—August 2001, Gisburn	13,870
Farm Business Recovery—October 2001, Middlesbrough	14,045
Waste Management Seminar—November 2001	13,131
2002	
Chemicals Stakeholder Forum—2002	4,690
Rural Revival Seminar—June 2002	1,105
SEAC Open Meeting—2002	37,255
Defra Hunting Hearings (three days)—2002	18,143
Eight Regional Events on Sustainable Food and Farming—2002	24,240
Noise Forum Conference—2002	313
Countryside Stewardship Campaign, 10th Anniversary Conference—2002	2,158
2003	
GMO (Genetically Modified Organisms) Foundation workshop—2003	78,500
GMO Organised meetings (radio)—2003	5,000
GMO Organised meetings (material)—2003	8,250
GMO Organised meetings (facilitation)—2003	9,600
GMO Organised meetings (launch)—2003	42,344
GMO Reconvened focus groups—2003	55,000
GMO Second tier meetings—2003	23,176
Additional GMO launch meetings—2003	29,176
Flood and Coastal Management Conference—2003	1,360
E-nabling Defra Conference—2003	3,900
England Bio-Diversity Conference—2003	900
Information Management Division Open day—2003	1,405
Better Buildings Summit—2003	26,325
Animal Health and Welfare Stakeholder Event—2003	622
Ethnic Minority Network Conference—2003	7,000
Flood Management Conference—2003	2,022
Rural Services Standard—2003	614
Darwin Lecture—London 2003	1,050
Growing Media Forum Seminar—2003	8,621
Science and Innovation Open Meeting—2003	8,971
2004	
Eight Regional TB events—2004	52,000
Sustainable Development Consultation Launch—London 2004	88,154
Anti-Microbial Resistance Abattoir Survey Meeting—Weybridge 2004	Awaiting final reconciliation
Regional Climate Change Conference—Buxton 2004	Awaiting final reconciliation
Climate Change Review Launch—London 2004	Awaiting final reconciliation
Chemical Consultation Review Launch—London 2004	3,220

Notes:

1. No conferences were cancelled.

2. The costs do not include the cost of departmental staff, details of which are not recorded against each conference.

Dairy Industry

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what proportion of the UK's milk quota was used in the last period for which figures are available. [207481]

Alun Michael: The UK's milk quota for the current quota year, which runs from 1 April 2004 to 31 March 2005, is 14,186 million litres. The provisional figure for the volume of milk delivered to purchasers up to the end of December 2004 is 10,370 million litres, which when adjusted for butterfat content is 10,407.5 million litres. This is 2.19 per cent. below the butterfat adjusted quota profile for the year.

The figure for the amount of milk produced for direct sale will not be available until the 2005–06 quota year.

Departmental Events

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list the *(a)* conferences, *(b)* seminars, *(c)* workshops, *(d)* exhibitions and *(e)* press conferences which have been sponsored by her Department and which took place on non-departmental premises in each of the last two years giving the (i) title, (ii) purpose, (iii) date and (iv) cost of each. [202367]

Alun Michael: Centrally held records of Defra funded third-party involvement indicate one conference held off departmental premises—the Ruralnet conference in Maidstone, Kent on 13 and 14 of October 2004.

Records for each directorate in Defra are not held centrally and could be collated only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the cost of refurbishments in her Department was in each year since 1997; and what the planned expenditure is for 2005–06. [205666]

Alun Michael: Cost of refurbishment work undertaken in Defra and Executive Agencies for each year since formation is:

	Cost
2001–02	
London, Ergon House (£ million)	3.75
London, Cromwell House (£ million)	1.3
Taunton, Quantock House (£000)	40
2002–03	
London, 9 Millbank (£ million)	2.5
2003–04	
London, 3–8 Whitehall (£ million)	1.3
London, Nobel House (£ million)	6.0
2004–05	
London, Nobel House (£ million)	13.0
London, 55 Whitehall (£ million)	3.3
Cambridge, Whitehouse Lane (£000)	100
Sutton Bonington, VLA (£000)	200
York, Kings Pool (£000)	50
Thirsk, VLA (£000)	50
Truro, Polwhele AHU (£000)	130
Carmarthen, VLA (£000)	410

Budgets for 2005–06 await approval. No refurbishment programme can be established at present.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much has been spent by her Department on lighting in each year since 1997. [205744]

Alun Michael: No separate records for the cost of lighting provision on the Defra estate are kept.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the running costs of the Department were in each year since 1997, broken down by *(a)* electricity, *(b)* water, *(c)* gas, *(d)* telephones, *(e)* mobile telephones and *(f)* televisions. [206670]

Alun Michael: The information shown in the table covers running costs for Defra from the time of its creation in 2001. It covers the central department (excluding Executive Agencies) and for utilities, only those buildings for which Defra has a contractual responsibility.

£000

	2001–02	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
(a) Electricity	1,190.2	920.8	979.0
(b) Water	138.9	103.8	105.6
(c) Gas	513.9	381.9	427.7
(d) telephones	3,483.6	1,817.0	1,260.0
(e) mobile telephones	2,527.5	755.2	473.1
(f) televisions	1.6	1.9	0.9

E-mails

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on her Department's policy regarding the retention of e-mails in electronic form *(a)* after and *(b)* up to 1 January 2005; and what instructions have been given regarding the deletion of e-mails prior to 1 January 2005. [206960]

Alun Michael: E-mail messages that form part of the official record are saved for as long as business needs require and stored corporately in accordance with departmental record management procedures. Defra's guidance on e-mail management emphasises the importance of capturing all significant e-mail messages—this policy has not changed. Further e-mail guidance is available on the National Archives website at:http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/electronicrecords/advice/pdf/managing_emails.pdf

Environment Council

Mr. Hood: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the outcome was of the Environment Council on 20 December; what the Government's stance was on the issues discussed, including its voting record; and if she will make a statement. [207059]

Mr. Morley: I attended the Environment Council on 20 December 2004, together with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

Council reached political agreement on two measures concerning the Aarhus Convention, both with the support of the UK. We agreed a draft Regulation on the application of provisions on access to information, public participation and access to justice in environmental matters to the Community institutions and bodies, with Belgium voting against. I intervened in the discussion to oppose a Commission suggestion that would have set a requirement that NGOs should be active at EU level to be entitled to use the access to justice provisions. Others took the same view and this proposal was not adopted.

There was unanimous agreement on a draft Decision to the effect that the European Community should ratify the Aarhus Convention. It is hoped that this will enable ratification by the EC to be concluded before the next meeting of the parties in May 2005. The Commission said it would enter a minutes statement concerning a declaration on external competence annexed to the decision.

We also reached political agreement on the proposed Directive on Batteries and Accumulators, following lengthy discussion of the main outstanding issues which were the extent of the partial ban on nickel cadmium batteries, and, particularly, the level and timing of collection targets. There was a wide range of views in Council, with strong pressure from a number of member states for tougher provisions on nickel cadmium and more ambitious collection targets. I argued for an evidence-based approach on nickel cadmium, and for achievable and proportionate collection targets, noting that the legal base used for this measure would not prevent member states that wished to go further from doing so. A compromise was reached after a difficult negotiation, involving targets of 25 per cent. after four years and 45 per cent. after eight years from the Directive coming into force. The exemption of cordless power tools from the nickel cadmium ban was maintained, with a Commission review after four years. Belgium abstained because the targets were too unambitious, Greece because they were too high, and Ireland because of the terms of the review of cordless power tools. Italy was also unable to support the political agreement.

We debated elements of the Regulation on the registration, evaluation, authorisation and restriction of chemicals (REACH). The Secretary of State welcomed a recent workshop held by the Netherlands Presidency on the wide range of impact assessment work being done on this dossier, and pointed out that the UK proposal for 'one substance one registration' would help reduce duplication of information and therefore costs.

There was general support for prioritising registration of substances of greatest concern, particularly those that may be persistent, bioaccumulative and toxic. Some member states would like to go further and there was limited interest in developing a risk-based approach at the registration stage. Mrs. Beckett expressed UK concerns about the practicality of such an approach in the absence of the data that would only become available during the registration process itself. The Commission took a similar line.

There was broad agreement in Council that the treatment of substances in finished products (articles) was important to safeguard human health and the environment but could raise issues of workability. In addition we should avoid any danger of creating a competitive advantage for goods imported from outside the EU. Mrs. Beckett strongly supported the principle of regulating substances in articles under REACH, but put forward concerns over the workability of the current Commission proposal.

There was no qualified majority for or against the Commission proposal for a Decision authorising placing an oilseed rape product (Brassica napus L,GT73 line), genetically modified for tolerance to the herbicide glyphosate, on the market. The UK abstained in this vote.

Council agreed a wide-ranging set of Conclusions on Climate Change: Medium and Long-term Strategies and Targets, following the 10th Conference of the Parties to the UN Climate Change Convention in Buenos Aires, and as a contribution to the planned discussion at the Spring European Council. I spoke supporting the need for quantified targets but, with Germany and the Commission, suggested that these should follow rather than precede Commission work on cost benefits due in February.

Council also adopted Conclusions on the review of the EU Sustainable Development Strategy, but was unable to do so on the Kok Report on the Lisbon Strategy. Some wished to widen the scope of the conclusions. For the UK, Mrs. Beckett strongly supported the succinct draft conclusions put forward by the Presidency. The Presidency concluded that Council should return to the discussion under the Luxembourg Presidency.

Council held a lengthy preliminary exchange of views on the proposed Regulation on the Financial instrument for the environment (LIFE+). Discussion focused on the need to ensure compatibility with the EU's overall budget. Views were expressed for and against the Commission's intention to focus funding from the new Regulation on policy support rather than implementation, which would be funded from other EU funding streams or by member states. A number of member states were concerned about possible gaps arising from this approach.

Council also exchanged views on the preparation for the 23rd Session of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Governing Council, to be held in February 2005, and heard from UNEP's Executive Director, Klaus Topfer. For the UK, the Secretary of State provided an opening intervention in response to a question on achieving complementarity between the Johannesburg outcomes and the Millennium Development Goals, and the role of UNEP in enhancing these synergies. This and subsequent interventions emphasised the need to recognise the links between the Millennium Development Goals and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the effective use of resources, underlining the necessity for all parties to make appropriate financial contributions to UNEP. The need for the Millennium Review summit to address environmental sustainability and climate change, and the importance of the Bali strategic plan for technology support and capacity building as a mechanism for implementation were also stressed.

Council adopted Conclusions on the Protection and Conservation of the Marine Environment without further discussion, in which we looked forward to the publication by the Commission of the thematic strategy on the marine environment, due in 2005 under the 6th Environmental Action Programme.

Under Other Business, the Secretary of State raised the urgent need for concrete measures to address increasing greenhouse gas emissions from aviation, and our preference for action through the EU Emissions Trading Scheme. Council was also briefed on the mercury strategy; a number of recent events organised by the Presidency covering legionella in Europe, exploring new approaches for the regulation of industrial installations (ENAP), energy in motion (i.e. sustainable transport), 25 years of the Directive on the conservation of wild birds, the soil thematic strategy and the Environment and Health Action Plan; Commission plans for the forthcoming thematic strategies; the UNECE and UNESCO high-level meeting in March 2005; and the management of biowaste.

Over lunch we also discussed Presidency ideas for a partnership between business stakeholders and governments to debate the delivery of a 'clean, clever and competitive' Europe.

Honey Production

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the contribution of honey production to the agricultural economy. [207745]

Alun Michael: In 2003 the UK produced 7,500 tonnes of honey worth £35 million, a significant increase over previous years. Part of this increase is attributable to the EU ban on imports of honey from China between 2002–04. British honey is produced by about 200 commercial bee farmers and some 43,000 private beekeepers. Their contribution to the agricultural economy is difficult to measure but the value of pollination as a service to agriculture has been estimated as at least £120 million a year.

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) if she will make a statement on funding for the National Bee Unit; [207747]

(2) what discussions she has had with colleagues in the Welsh Assembly Government on funding for disease inspection programmes in the bee industry. [207748]

Alun Michael: The bee health programmes in England and Wales are implemented by the National Bee Unit under separate contracts funded by Defra and the Welsh Assembly Government respectively. In 2004–05, the unit will receive funding of £1.235 million from Defra and £0.283 million from the Welsh Assembly.

The Department has informed officials of the Welsh Assembly Government about plans for refocusing the English programme over the next three years. The Welsh Assembly Government was represented at a meeting between Defra officials and beekeepers on 26 November.

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what discussions she has had with the National Bee Unit on future disease threats faced by beekeepers; [207749]

(2) what assessment she has made of the disease threat faced by bee colonies. [207750]

Alun Michael: Part of the role of the National Bee Unit is to advise the Department on the development of its programme to control notifiable pests and diseases of bees in England and to minimise the risk of introduction of potentially serious exotic pests. There are regular discussions between the Department and the unit on these matters.

In the light of the National Bee Unit's assessment of the disease threats faced by bee colonies, the Department has concluded that statutory enforcement provisions for the control of varroa are now of low priority since this pest has become endemic. Plans are being made to remove varroasis from the list of notifiable diseases. Similar action is contemplated in respect of European foul brood in 2007–08, subject to satisfactory results from continuing applied research. This will allow the National Bee Unit to devote more of its resources to novel pests and diseases, including tropilaelaps and the small hive beetle, for which contingency measures are currently being developed.

Newspapers/Periodicals

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list the *(a)* newspapers and *(b)* periodicals taken by her Department in each year since 1997; and how much the Department spent on each in each year. [207638]

Alun Michael: The Department currently takes eight newspaper titles and 219 periodical titles through its library services. I am placing a copy of the full listing of these in the Library of the House of Commons. Newspaper and periodical requirements are reviewed annually to ensure their continuing relevance to the Department's changing business needs. As a result, some titles are cancelled and new ones subscribed to.

Defra was established in June 2001. Its expenditure on newspapers and periodicals since then through its library services is set out as follows:

	£
2001–02	118,160
2002–03	91,095
2003–04	60,480

These figures exclude the spend on newspapers and periodicals by Defra local offices and the Department's Executive Agencies. These figures could be compiled only at a disproportionate cost.

Pesticides

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what processes are in place to ensure that advice from the Advisory Committee on Pesticides considers economic issues relating to the pesticides industry. [208309]

Alun Michael: The remit of the Advisory Committee on Pesticides (ACP) requires that they are able to advise Ministers on all aspects of pesticide use. To this end, the committee includes within its membership independent experts on a wide range of relevant subjects, including economics.

Stolen Property

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list the property belonging to her Department that has been *(a)* stolen and *(b)* reported lost in each year since 1997, broken down by type of article. [206376]

Alun Michael: The information supplied within the following tables excludes property lost or stolen by executive agencies, and is only available from 2001–02, as the Department did not exist prior to that year.

In addition to the data, a number of cage traps have been damaged or lost as a result of action by animal right activists. Details are unavailable, although the calculated value since 2001–02 amounts to circa £60,000.

The following three tables comprise a summary sheet for the three years since the Department's inception supported by a workings sheet and detailed inventory of individual items.

Summary of items stolen or lost for years 2001 to 2004

	Quantity			*Amount (£)*		
	2001–02	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
Items categorised as stolen						
Laptop	4	6	2	6,691	10,221	1,151
Mobile phone	6	1	0	441	40	0
PCs	3	4	1	3332	6,208	1,916
Monitors	0	6	0	0	4,004	0
Projectors	0	2	0	0	5,160	0
Pressure washers	0	3	0	0	2,885	0
Digital camera	0	2	0	0	700	0
Total	13	24	3	10,464	29,218	3,067
Items categorised as lost						
Laptop	6	3	1	10,301	4,465	1,664
Mobile phone	2	5	0	180	740	0
PCs	0	2	0	0	647	0
Projectors	1	0	0	300	0	0
Scanner	0	1	0	0	200	0

Summary of items stolen or lost for years 2001 to 2004

	Quantity			*Amount (£)*		
	2001–02	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
Global positioning unit	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fax modem	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dictaphone	21	3	0	3,936	280	0
Pressure washers	1	0	1	1,586	0	2,624
Protective clothing	0	1	0	0	57	6
Burn site equipment	1	0	0	1,422	0	0
Total	32	15	2	17,725	6,389	4,288
Combined total of items stolen or lost						
Laptop	10	9	3	16,992	14,686	2,815
Mobile phone	8	6	0	621	780	0
PCs	3	6	1	3,332	6,855	1,916
Pressure washers	1	3	1	1,586	2,885	2,624
Monitors	0	6	0	0	4,004	0
Projectors	1	2	0	300	5,160	0
Scanners	0	1	0	0	200	0
Digital camera	0	2	0	0	700	0
Fax modem	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dictaphone	21	3	0	3,936	280	0
Global positioning unit	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protective clothing	0	1	0	0	57	0
Burn site equipment	1	0	0	1,422	0	0
Total	45	39	5	28,189	35,607	7,355

Items stolen or lost, analysed by year and category

Category/Item	*Quantity*	*Amount (£)*
2001–02		
Theft		
Laptop	4	6,690.32
Mobile Phones	6	441.35
PC Hardrive	1	800.00
PC Viewer	1	2,173.75
PC	1	358.16
Total		10,463.58
Loss		
Laptop	6	10,301.30
Mobile Phones	4	297.50
Projector	1	300.00
Pressure Hose and Fittings	1	1,586.25
Burn Site Equipment	1	1,421.75
Dictaphones	21	3,936.00
Cage traps	?	26,046.00
Total		43,888.80
2002–03		
Theft		
Laptop	6	10,221.00
Mobile Phones	1	40.00
Digital Camera	2	700.00
PCs	2	2,620.00
PC Base Unit	1	587.50
IT equipment	1	3,000.00
Monitors	6	4,004.40
Projectors	2	5,160.00
Pressure washers	3	2,885.00
Total		29,217.90
Loss		
Laptop	3	4,464.59
Mobile Phones	5	740.00
PC	2	647.00
Scanner	1	200.00
Dictaphones	3	280.00
Protective clothing	1	57.58
Total		6,389.17
2003–04		
Theft		
Laptop	2	1,151.44
IT equipment	1	1,916.00
Total		3,067.44

Items stolen or lost, analysed by year and category

Category/Item	*Quantity*	*Amount (£)*
Loss		
Laptop	1	1,663.72
Diesel Pressure Washer	1	2,623.78
Cage Traps	1,013	34,188.75
Total		38,476.25

Inventory of items stolen or lost for years 2001–04

Year/Category	*Item*	*Amount (£)*
2001–02		
Theft	Psion	358.16
Theft	Two Mobile phones	96.35
Theft	Cage traps Binoculars GPS Pager	26,046
Theft	PC Hard Drive	800
Loss	Two laptops	2,060.26
Theft	Projector and Laptop	1,578
Theft	Laptop	1,933.32
Loss (not delivered)	Four laptops	8,241.04
Theft	Laptop	1,679
Theft	PC viewer	2,173.75
Loss	Pressure hose and fittings	1,586.25
Loss	FMD burn site	1,421.75
Theft	Mobile phone	120
Theft	Phone	25
Theft	Mobile phone	100
Loss	Mobile phone	100
Theft	Mobile phone	100
Loss	Mobile phone	80
Theft	Laptop	1,500
Loss	Mobile phone	58.75
Loss	Mobile phone	58.75
Loss	Overhead Projector	300
Loss	Dictaphone	299
Loss	Dictaphone	299
Loss	Dictaphone	86
Loss	Dictaphone	86
Loss	Dictaphone	86
Loss	Dictaphone	86
Loss	Dictaphone	299
Loss	Dictaphone	299
Loss	Dictaphone	299
Loss	Dictaphone	86
Loss	Dictaphone	86

Inventory of items stolen or lost for years 2001-04

Year/Category	*Item*	*Amount (£)*
Loss	Dictaphone	86
Loss	Dictaphone	299
Loss	Dictaphone	86
Loss	Dictaphone	86
Loss	Dictaphone	299
Loss	Dictaphone	86
Loss	Dictaphone	299
Loss	Dictaphone	86
Loss	Dictaphone	299
Loss	Dictaphone	299
2002-03		
Theft	Three pressure washers	2,885
Theft	Digital camera	350
Theft	Mobile phone	40
Theft	Digital camera	350
Theft	Laptop	2,000
Loss	Three mobile phones	360
Loss	PC	447
Theft	Laptop	1500
Loss	Scanner	200
Loss	Two laptops	3,200
Theft	PC base unit	587.5
Theft	Two monitors	1,334.8
Loss	Mobile phone	300
Theft	Laptop	342
Theft	Laptop	1,815
Theft	Laptop	2,764
Loss	Laptop	1,264.59
Theft	Four monitors	2,669.6
Theft	Two projectors	5,160
Theft	Laptop	1,800
Loss	Mobile phone	80
Theft	Two PCs	2,620
Theft	Computer equipment	3,000
Loss	PC	200
Loss	Protective clothing	57.58
Loss (damage)	Rabies van	2,500
Loss	Three dictaphones	280
2003-04		
Theft	Laptop	56.96
Loss	Laptop	1,663.72
Theft	IT equipment	1,916
Loss	Diesel pressure washer	2,623.78
Loss	1013 Cage traps	34,188.75
Theft	Laptop	1094.48

UN Environment Programme

Mr. Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the UK's financial contribution to the UN Environment Programme is for *(a)* 2004–05 and *(b)* 2005–06; and if she will make a statement. [207472]

Mr. Morley: The UK contribution to UNEP for 2004 was £4.2 million.

No request has yet been received for payment in 2005. The UK expects to match last year's level of £4.2 million, in line with UNEP's voluntary Indicative Scale of Contributions.

Waste

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what proportion of commercial and industrial waste was biodegradable in the last period for which figures are available. [206790]

Mr. Morley: Estimates from the 1998–99 Environment Agency survey suggest that about 44 per cent. of industrial and commercial waste is paper, card or food. A further 22 per cent. is mixed waste of which an unknown proportion is biodegradable. Publication of more up to date survey data should take place later in the year.

World Conservation Monitoring Centre

Mr. Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the financial position of the World Conservation Monitoring Centre in Cambridge; and if she will make a statement. [207469]

Mr. Morley: The UNEP-World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) has experienced short term financial difficulties caused by a combination of factors, including exchange rate fluctuations between the US dollar and sterling and changes in the way the Centre's core funding is provided.

Defra officials are in discussion with UNEP, WCMC Trustees and staff of the Centre to explore ways to secure its short and long-term future.

Mr. Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs which of her Department's publications have drawn on information produced by the World Conservation Monitoring Centre at Cambridge; and if she will make a statement. [207470]

Mr. Morley: Work carried out by the UNEP-World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) is used by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) to inform and support discussions in key environment fora such as the Convention on Biological Diversity. In particular, the Centre has produced papers, to help focus international discussions on the implementation of the biodiversity target adopted at the World Summit on Sustainable Development to achieve a significant reduction in the rate of biodiversity loss by 2010. This included documentation for an international meeting in London in May 2003—'2010—The Biodiversity Challenge'.

The UK's delivery plan on biodiversity 'Beyond Johannesburg: Delivering our International Biodiversity Commitments', published by Defra in May 2004, uses statistics on biodiversity loss produced by UNEP-WCMC.

Defra reports to the Convention on International Trade on Endangered Species (CITES) and other international species conservation conventions also include much information that has been drawn from UNEP-WCMC's databases.

The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, to which the UK Government has contributed, draws upon significant amounts of published work by UNEP-WCMC.

Mr. Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when *(a)* she and *(b)* her officials last met the staff of the World Conservation Monitoring Centre at Cambridge; and what was discussed. [207471]

Mr. Morley: I met Dr. Klaus Toepfer, the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), on 6 January 2005 and discussed the UNEP-World Conservation Monitoring Centre

(UNEP-WCMC) amongst other issues. Dr. Toepfer and I expressed our commitment to securing the short and long term future of the centre.

Defra officials are also in frequent contact with staff and management of the Centre on a host of biodiversity issues.

DEFENCE

Army Establishment

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when his Department expects to produce the establishment figure for the next three years for the *(a)* Signals, *(b)* Engineers, *(c)* Logistics and *(d)* Intelligence Corps. [208302]

Mr. Ingram: The detailed implications for the establishments of all the arms and services of the Army are being worked through now as we move forward with the reorganisation of the Army. We anticipate that establishment figures will be finalised in the next few months.

Army Recruitment

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many people were recruited into the Royal Gloucestershire, Berkshire and Wiltshire regiments in each of the last five years; and how that affected establishment in each case. [204908]

Mr. Caplin: Individual regiments are not allocated on recruitment, but during or on completion of training. Therefore the information in the following tables refers only to the trained strength of the Royal Gloucestershire Berkshire and Wiltshire Regiment. The numbers recruited into the regiment are represented in terms of gains to the trained strength of the regiment.

Gains to the trained strength of The Royal Gloucestershire Berkshire and Wiltshire Regiment (RGBW)

Financial year	Officers	Soldiers	Total
1999–2000	—	50	50
2000–01	—	80	80
2001–02	10	70	80
2002–03	10	60	60
2003–04	—	80	80

Trained strength of The Royal Gloucestershire Berkshire and Wiltshire Regiment (RGBW)

		Infantry personnel with RGBW capbadge		*Other (non-RGBW)*		*Total*		
As at 1 April	*Serving in:*	*Officer*	*Soldier*	*Officer*	*Soldier*	*Officer*	*Soldier*	*Total*
1999	RGBW Regiment	30	450	—	70	30	520	550
	Not serving with the Regiment	60	90	—	—	60	90	140
	Total	80	530	—	70	90	610	690
2000	RGBW Regiment	30	400	—	60	30	460	490
	Not serving with the Regiment	50	80	—	—	50	80	140
	Total	80	480	—	60	80	540	630
2001	RGBW Regiment	30	440	—	90	30	540	570
	Not serving with the Regiment	50	80	—	—	50	80	130
	Total	80	520	—	90	80	610	690
2002	RGBW Regiment	30	460	—	70	40	520	560
	Not serving with the Regiment	50	70	—	—	50	70	120
	Total	80	530	—	70	80	600	680
2003	RGBW Regiment	30	450	10	70	40	520	550
	Not serving with the Regiment	50	80	—	—	50	80	130
	Total	80	530	10	70	90	590	680
2004	RGBW Regiment	30	480	—	80	40	560	600
	Not serving with the Regiment	50	60	—	—	50	60	110
	Total	80	540	—	80	80	620	710

Note:

Figures are rounded to the nearest 10 and therefore totals may not always equal the sum of the parts.

Body Armour

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many sets of body armour were issued by the Army between 1989 and the end of January; to which units they were issued; how many men were serving in each of those units at the end of January; and if he will make a statement. [207051]

Mr. Ingram: I appreciate that the hon. Member has previously raised questions regarding the issue of body armour to armed forces personnel and I would refer him to the data for the period 1992–2003 that was published by the House of Commons Defence Committee on 8 June 2004 (HC 635), as part of the Government's response to its 'Lessons of Iraq' inquiry. Information prior to 1992 is unavailable. Additional issues data for 2004 to the end of January 2005 can be provided if required.

Details of the units to which issues have been made since 1992 and the number of personnel serving in those units is not held centrally, may be incomplete and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Following lessons learned on Op Telic, a policy that guarantees the issue of body armour to personnel has now been endorsed and is currently being implemented. All Royal Marine, Army and Royal Air Force personnel are to be provided with combat body armour as an item of personal equipment. This is being undertaken in order of priority, commencing with personnel in operationally-liable units. The plates which are added to form enhanced combat body armour (ECBA) will be held centrally and issued to formations and units in accordance with readiness states, when required prior to deployment on overseas operations. Separate arrangements are in place to guarantee that Royal Navy, Royal Fleet Auxiliary, the Reserves and civilian personnel in support of military operations overseas are also provided with ECBA prior to deployment.

Depleted Uranium

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many depleted uranium shells used by UK forces have been recovered from the waters of *(a)* the UK and *(b)* overseas and Commonwealth partners in each of the last 10 years; and if he will make a statement. [207809]

Mr. Caplin: There is no centralised system for recording such information. However, relevant work on this matter has been in progress since early December 2004 and is expected to be completed shortly. I will therefore write to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

English Regiments

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the restructuring of the English regiments. [208799]

Mr. Ingram: I refer the hon. Member to the statement made by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence on 16 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1195.

EU Battlegroup

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the UK has given *(a)* individual and *(b)* joint commitment to an EU battlegroup; and if he will make a statement on the rotation cycle dates. [201626]

Mr. Hoon: During the initial operational capability period (2005–06), the UK has offered to hold at very high readiness, between 1 January and 30 June 2005, a national battlegroup drawn from our Joint Rapid Response Force. France has also offered a national battlegroup in parallel during the first half of 2005.

For the full operational capability period (from 2007 onwards), the UK intends to contribute to the EU battlegroup co-ordinated pool through a lead nation battlegroup drawn from our Joint Rapid Response Force, and a multinational battlegroup in partnership with the Netherlands using the existing UK/Netherlands Amphibious Force. We will hold one of these at very high readiness for six months in any two year timeframe. The offers of battlegroups to the full operational capability will be co-ordinated by the contributing countries on a regular basis, to ensure that at least two battlegroups (of the 13 that have been offered so far) will be available at very high readiness at any one time.

Infantry

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the cost is of *(a)* recruiting, *(b)* testing and *(c)* providing basic training for an infantry recruit. [208832]

Mr. Caplin: The cost of recruiting and providing training for an Infantry recruit for the financial year 2003–04 at the Infantry Training Centre Catterick (ITC(C)) was as follows:

	Cost for financial year 2003–04 (£)
Recruiting cost	4,000
Cost of training an infantryman	22,000
Total training and recruiting costs	26,000

These costs are calculated on an accruals basis and include non cash items such as depreciation and cost of capital. The cost of testing a recruit is embedded within these costs and cannot be shown separately. Since April 2002 the infantry has had a combined phase 1 and 2 training course at ITC(C) and, as a result, it is now not possible to separate infantry training into distinctive basic and trade training costs.

Iraq

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the 2nd Battalion Princess of Wales Royal Regiment will be deployed outside the British zone of responsibility in Iraq. [208262]

Mr. Ingram: We have no plans to deploy the 2nd Battalion, The Princess of Wales Royal Regiment outside the United Kingdom's area of responsibility in southern Iraq, with the exception of a single platoon from 2PWRR which will provide a protection force for senior British military personnel based in Baghdad. This is a routine deployment, and a direct replacement for a platoon from 40 Commando (Royal Marines), which is due to return to the UK over the next few days on completion of its tour of duty.

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many doctors are allocated on a full-time basis to detention centres or prison centres run by British military authorities in Iraq. [208744]

Mr. Caplin: There is one doctor allocated full-time to the Divisional Temporary Detention Centre in Basrah, which is the only United Kingdom detention centre in Iraq.

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Iraqi *(a)* men and *(b)* women were held in detention or in prison by British military forces in Iraq on 1 December 2004. [208745]

Mr. Ingram: On 1 December 2004, there were 10 Iraqi male and no female internees in the divisional temporary detention facility in Basrah, which is the only United Kingdom detention facility in Iraq.

Manning/Record Offices

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what extra resources he is putting at the disposal of manning and record offices following his statement of 16 December 2004. [206620]

Mr. Caplin: The Army's Manning and Research Offices co-located in Glasgow between December1996 and July 1997, to become part of the Army Personnel Centre (APC), which is responsible for managing the careers of Army personnel.

The APC sees no need for extra resources to manage the limited redundancy programme for 400 personnel, arising from the announcement on 16 December. The implications of managing the Infantry by individual posting rather than arms plotting are being carefully considered, as are the redeployment issues, but it is too soon to say whether additional resources will be required. The APC will keep the position under review.

Military Discipline

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many soldiers were listed as being *(a)* absent without leave and *(b)* deserters on the 1 October of each of the last five years for which figures are available; and in each case what percentage this represented of the enrolled strength of the Army on that date. [208202]

Mr. Caplin: I will write to the hon. Member and place a copy of my letter in the Library of the House.

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many *(a)* Army, *(b)* Royal Navy and *(c)* Royal Air Force personnel served sentences at the Military Corrective Training Centre, Colchester, in each of the last five years for which figures are available; and in each case how many (i) resumed their military career and (ii) were discharged from the armed forces. [208203]

Mr. Ingram: The number of service personnel, broken down by service, who have served sentences of detention at the Military Corrective Training Centre (MCTC) and were subsequently retained or discharged from the armed force in the last five years is as follows:

	RN		*RM*		*ARMY*		*RAF*	
	Retained	*Discharged*	*Retained*	*Discharged*	*Retained*	*Discharged*	*Retained*	*Discharged*
2000	49	20	8	3	765	343	36	7
2001	47	23	15	8	596	368	47	11
2002	45	28	13	5	654	363	38	10
2003	62	23	6	2	653	366	43	8
2004	73	23	15	5	649	452	40	6
Total	276	117	57	23	3,317	1,892	204	42

In addition, 127 service personnel have passed through MCTC between 2000 to 2004 in transit to serve a sentence of imprisonment in a civil prison. These individuals are automatically discharged.

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many female members of the armed forces served sentences at the Military Corrective Training Centre, Colchester in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [208204]

Mr. Ingram: The number of female service personnel who have served sentences of detention at the Military Corrective Training Centre in the past five years is as follows:

	Number
2000	32
2001	26
2002	34
2003	28
2004	15
Total	135

Nigel Gorman

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what action has been taken against Wing Commander Nigel Gorman; under what regulations he was ordered back from his assignment; what charges were laid against him; and what procedures were adopted to hear and adjudicate on these charges. [208752]

Mr. Caplin: No charges have been brought against Wing Commander Gorman, but various allegations against him are subject to an on-going RAF police investigation. Wing Commander Gorman was not ordered back from his overseas detachment. The decision that he should return early was made with his agreement because of the nature of the allegations against him.

Parachute Regiment

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether trainees with the Parachute Regiment wear emergency parachutes during training jumps; and if he will make a statement. [209152]

Mr. Ingram: Trainees with the Parachute Regiment undergo their training as infantrymen at the Infantry Training Centre Catterick. Their course is 26 weeks in length, followed by a three week Basic Parachute Course at RAF Brize Norton. All jumps are made with the Low Level Reserve Parachute (LLRP), as the reserve parachute is known. Students are not allowed onto an aircraft for their first training jump until they are fully confident in the actions required to deploy the LLRP.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) how many written questions for his Department were unanswered when Parliament Prorogued; and how many of the unanswered questions were tabled in each of the previous months of the 2003–04 Session; [201545]

(2) when he will reply to the Question tabled for answer on 1 December, reference 201545. [207315]

Mr. Caplin: No written questions to the Ministry of Defence remained unanswered when the House Prorogued on 18 November.

Royal Gloucestershire, Berkshire and Wiltshire Regiment

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence to what precedent he referred in deciding upon a method for disbanding the Royal Gloucestershire, Berkshire and Wiltshire Regiment. [208830]

Mr. Ingram: It is vital that we ensure that the Army of the future is properly configured to meet the priorities and challenges of the future, rather than the past. The Army has always evolved to meet current and future challenges and it is a fact that very few of our regiments and corps exist today in the same form as they did in the past.

Of a number of options considered for the Prince of Wales's Division, the solution of merging the prior Glosters element of the Royal Gloucestershire, Berkshire and Wiltshire Regiment with the Devonshire and Dorset Regiment and the prior Duke of Edinburgh's Royal Regiment element of the RGBW with the Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment, was judged to offer the least overall disruption and the most coherent regional and structural outcome.

Service Discipline

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many of the complaints considered under redress procedures since 1997 concerned *(a)* sexual harassment, *(b)* racial harassment, *(c)* parental leave directive, *(d)* pay and *(e)* religion broken down by service. [201841]

Mr. Caplin: Information is not held in the form requested as the Services only hold statistics for the number of complaints considered at Service Board level. Details are as follows:

Naval Service

The Naval Service do not hold complete records prior to 2001. Between 2001 and 2003, one case involved sexual harassment and 22 pay related issues.

Army

Between 1999 and 2003, the Army recorded 29 complaints alleging sexual harassment, 18 alleged racial harassment, one religious harassment and 192 related to pay issues.

RAF

Between 1997 and 2003, the number of complaints for sexual harassment and discrimination was 87, the number for racial harassment and discrimination was 28 and 262 complaints concerned pay.

Tsunami (Military Assistance)

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence which Government Department is paying the costs of using the Hercules aircraft based at RAF Lyneham for disaster relief. [208818]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence is currently engaged in assisting the Department for International Development (DfID) in providing disaster relief in the countries surrounding the Indian Ocean. DfID has agreed to reimburse MOD the marginal costs incurred.

Welsh Regiments

Mr. Edwards: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will change the name of the new Welsh infantry regiment to ensure that the names of the Royal Regiment of Wales and the Royal Welch Fusiliers are more prominent, in a manner similar to that used for the renaming of the Scottish infantry regiments. [208692]

Mr. Ingram: As I have made clear throughout, the process of re-structuring the infantry has been worked through by the Army, consulting with the divisions and regiments concerned.

The outcome of the Army's deliberations, announced on 16 December by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence, is that a new large infantry regiment will be formed to represent Wales. The Royal Welch Fusiliers and the Royal Regiment of Wales will combine to form what will be known as The Royal Welsh Regiment. They will be known respectively as 1st Battalion The Royal Welsh (The Royal Welch Fusiliers) and 2nd Battalion The Royal Welsh (The Royal Regiment of Wales).

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence for what reasons the decision was taken not to name the new Royal Welsh regiment by showing its name in brackets behind the old battalion names in the same way as the Royal Regiment of Scotland. [208796]

Mr. Ingram: The Executive Committee of the Army Board (ECAB) took into account advice from the Colonel Commandant of the Prince of Wales's Division (in which the Welsh regiments sit) as the representative of the regiments concerned. The ECAB accepted this advice and concluded that the new regiment should be called The Royal Welsh and that its two battalions should be called 1st Battalion The Royal Welsh (The Royal Welch Fusiliers) and 2nd Battalion The Royal Welsh (The Royal Regiment of Wales).

The title for the new Scottish Regiment and those for its constituent battalions proposed by the Colonel Commandant of the Scottish Division, were endorsed by the ECAB, who considered that the bold move direct to the largest single cap badge regiment warranted the retention of the antecedent names foremost. It was also felt that given the very different nature and large geographical spread of the existing regiments from Scotland, this would help maintain the best possible recruitment.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Asylum Seekers

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the net current expenditure on asylum seekers by each local authority in *(a)* Scotland and *(b)* Wales has been in each year since 1996–97. [204530]

Mr. Browne: The information is not available in the precise format requested. There is no information available for financial years prior to 1999–2000. The Home Office assumed responsibility for the budget for asylum seekers on 1 April 1999.

For Wales, The National Asylum Support Service (NASS) makes payments direct to each local authority responsible for supporting asylum seekers. Information is only available for the periods 6 December 1999–31 March 2000, 2000–01 and 2001–02 and this information is reproduced.

For Scotland, in the years 1999–2000 to 2001–02, NASS made payments to the Scottish Executive who distributed the funding to local authorities in Scotland supporting asylum seekers. NASS does not have any information relating to expenditure incurred by Scottish local authorities.

£

	6 December 1999 to 31 March 2000		*1 April 2000 to 31 March 2001*		*1 April 2001 to 31 March 2002*	
Local Authority	*Expenditure claimed*	*Maximum claim*	*Expenditure claimed*	*Maximum claim*	*Expenditure claimed*	*Maximum claim*
Blaenau Gwent County	—	—	6,014.39	7,280.00	—	—
Bridgend County	1,844.00	1,680.00	—	—	—	—
Caerphllly County	10,946.21	13,819.02	35,659.12	43,680.00	23,413.05	22,770.00
Cardiff	175,850.00	206,393.00	753,207.00	799,560.00	471,029.00	475,020.00
Carmarthenshire	—	—	—	—	—	—
Ceredigion CC	—	—	3,118.65	3,780.00	6,350.15	7,280.00
Conwy CBC	1,200.00	2,240.00	2,925.00	5,460.00	—	—
Denbighshire County	1,300.00	1,300.00	5,276.83	7,280.00	1,007.21	1,240.00
Flintshire	1,750.00	2,520.00	2,747.16	7,280.00	2,396.69	6,020.00
Gwynedd	—	—	749.07	700.00	—	—
Isle of Anglesey CC	—	—	—	—	—	—
Merthyr Tydfil County	1,220.65	2,380.00	3,269.17	6,300.00	—	—
Monmouthshire County	6,425.24	4,480.00	10,610.28	14,560.00	11,292.10	14,560.00
Neath Port Talbot	1,685.81	2,380.00	8,186.10	14,560.00	5,740.15	7,280.00
Newport County (South Wales)	30,721.36	27,871.73	167,784.43	160,400.00	159,494.42	179,370.00
Pembrokeshire	6,923.53	6,923.53	32,295.00	34,339.20	10,226.56	12,320.00
Powys CC	—	—	—	—	—	—
Rhondda Cynon Taff County	16,713.36	14,041.00	50,635.77	56,860.00	31,424.00	39,740.00
Swansea City and County	6,973.15	27,380.00	36,504.00	45,960.00	39,264.68	48,360.00
Torfaen CBC	—	—	—	—	—	—
Vale of Glamorgan	17,122.00	13,320.00	54,501.00	56,160.00	55,009.00	56,160.00
Wrexham	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	280,675.31	326,728.28	1,173,482.97	1,264,159.20	816,647.01	870,120.00

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many asylum seekers have been held at HMP Lewes in each month from January 2003 to date; and how many *(a)* had been convicted of an offence, *(b)* were on remand and *(c)* were otherwise held in each month. [207201]

Mr. Browne *[holding answer 10 January 2005]:* Details of the nationality or immigration status of a defendant proceeded against are not collected centrally on the Home Office Court Proceedings Database. Therefore it is not possible to say how many asylum seekers who have been convicted of an offence or were on remand are held at Her Majesty's Prison Lewes.

Information on the number of persons who had claimed asylum at some stage and were detained at Her Majesty's Prison Lewes solely under Immigration Act powers, on the final Saturday of each quarter since January 2003 is shown in the table. Information on the total number of persons detained solely under Immigration Act powers in each month is not available.

Persons recorded as being in detention in HMP Lewes solely under Immigration Act powers, who have applied for asylum at some stage[1]

As at given date	*Number of detainees*
29 March 2003	*
28 June 2003	*
27 September 2003	*
27 December 2003	*
27 March 2004	*
28 June 2004	5
25 September 2004	*

[1] Figures rounded to the nearest 5, with * = 1 or 2

Work is ongoing to improve the quality of data held on those people detained under Immigration Act powers in Prison Service establishments.

Information on persons detained solely under Immigration Act powers is published on the Home Office Research Development and Statistics Directorate website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what information in respect of asylum seekers held within prison establishments is provided to outside individuals and groups who have as part of their remit the helping of such individuals. [207202]

Mr. Browne *[holding answer 10 January 2005]:* Her Majesty's Prison Service does not provide personal data about individual prisoners to other organisations because of Data Protection Act considerations.

All prisons have a Legal Services Officer whose role is to facilitate access to legal services for all prisoners in respect of all legal issues, including asylum claims. A number of establishments—such as Brixton—work with non-governmental organisations such as the Detainee Advice Service to ensure prisoners have access to advice on their immigration cases.

British Passports

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average time for a British passport application to be processed has been in each year since 1997. [204449]

Mr. Browne: The average processing times provided in the table relate to the time taken to issue straightforward, properly completed applications by the UK Passport Service during the calendar year.

	Average processing time (days)
1997	8.4
1998	11.3
1999	19.8
2000	5.1
2001	4.4
2002	4.0
2003	3.9
2004	4.9

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the number of British people without *(a)* a passport and *(b)* a driving licence in each year since 1997. [204450]

Mr. Browne: The table indicates, within a range, the number of people resident in Britain that do not hold a valid UK passport; and the population not holding a driver's licence.

Million

	(a) Resident population not holding passports	*(b) Population not holding a driving licence*
2004[1]	11.16–16.94	24.61
2003	12.33–18.19	24.43
2002	14.30–20.13	24.21
2001	16.49–22.25	24.03
2000	18.62–24.21	23.64
1999	20.57–26.04	23.48
1998	22.58–27.83	23.31
1997	25.04–29.85	23.17

[1] 2004 passport figure calculated using figures up to November 2004.

Sources:

(a) UK Passport Service

(b) DVLA

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many British passports have been issued in each year since 1997. [204451]

Mr. Browne: The number of passports issued by the UK Passport Service for each calendar year was as follows:

	Number of passports issued
1997	4,729,467
1998	4,851,215
1999	5,614,360
2000	5,492,141
2001	5,668,272
2002	5,397,050
2003	5,532,350
2004	6,070,626

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many forged passports have been impounded in each year since 1997. [204452]

Mr. Browne: Figures are not kept centrally within the Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND) for the number of forged passports impounded each year.

Since 1997 numbers of fraudulent travel documents detected at United Kingdom ports of entry are as follows:

	Number
1997	4,411
1998	6,338
1999	5,516
2000	5,394
2001	6,601
2002	9,664
2003	7,985

Since 2001 the National Document Fraud Unit (NDFU) has had a permanent presence in the main offices of IND in Croydon, following a pilot exercise which revealed large numbers of fraudulent travel documents being submitted in support of applications for leave to remain. Fraudulent documents detected by NDFU in Croydon from 2001 are:

	Number
2001	360
2002	461
2003	837

The NDFU makes a significant contribution to work being carried out internationally in the EU, International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) and G8 to disrupt the work of forgers and to encourage states to impound, and thereby withdraw from circulation, forged and fraudulent passports and other travel documents detected. It also works closely with travel document issuing agencies in order to combat identity fraud and support the operation of border controls.

Criminal Cases Review Commission

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what discussions he has had in the last two years regarding the terms of reference of the Criminal Cases Review Commission. [207513]

Paul Goggins: I am the Minister with responsibility for the Criminal Cases Review Commission.

As such, I have visited the Commission and been involved in general discussions and correspondence about its work. Officials have also had numerous discussions with the Commission about all aspects of its work including some proposed changes to its powers and jurisdiction. Over the last two years there has been no occasion where it was necessary for Ministers to hold discussions regarding the terms of reference of the Criminal Cases Review Commission.

Identity Fraud

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what progress has been made with his Department's project examining the feasibility of sharing data about deceased persons with organisations involved in fraud prevention. [207195]

Mr. Browne: The Home Office-led Identity Fraud Steering Committee, which comprises public and private sector organisations that are committed to reducing identity fraud, began a project in November 2004 to explore the benefits, feasibility and legal impediments of sharing public sector deceased person information with private sector organisations involved in fraud prevention.

The project is making good progress and is due for completion at the end of January 2005.

Immigration Appeals

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when officials at the Immigration Appellate Authority will set a date for the appeal hearing of a constituent of the hon. Member for Vauxhall, reference number: M1154882. [203536]

Mr. Lammy: I have been asked to reply.

There is currently no appeal before the Immigration Appellate Authority. The Immigration and Nationality Directorate has confirmed that it has no record of an appeal for this case.

Identity Cards

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what costs are associated with the issue of *(a)* a free-standing identity card and *(b)* a combined passport and identity card. [201407]

Mr. Browne: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave in reply to the question from the hon. Member for Edinburgh, West (John Barrett), on 20 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1901W.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what arrangements he plans to make to allow British citizens living overseas to register for identity cards. [207622]

Mr. Browne: The identity cards scheme will apply to British citizens resident in the United Kingdom, as well as to foreign nationals legally resident for more than three months. There will be no requirement on British citizens resident abroad to register for an identity card until such time as they come to take up residence here.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of countries which *(a)* have introduced national identity cards since September 2001 and *(b)* are in the process of introducing them. [207691]

Mr. Browne: Identity card schemes have existed in most EU countries for many years. Only the UK, Ireland, Denmark and Latvia do not have an identity card scheme, although Denmark has a system of population registration.

Lithuania introduced identity cards in 2003. Sweden has plans to introduce a national identity card scheme to replace privately issued identity cards available at present. Latvia also has plans to introduce identity cards. In addition, countries such as Germany and France are actively looking at ways in which to increase security of their identity cards.

Home Office officials have had detailed discussions with colleagues involved in the operation of identity card schemes in Italy, Spain, Sweden, the Netherlands and Germany and lessons learned have informed the development of policy where appropriate. Comprehensive information has been supplied by each of the EU member states on the operation of their card schemes. The results of this work comprise Annex 3 of "Entitlement Cards and Identity Fraud: A Consultation" (CM 5557) published in July 2002.

Dr. Pugh: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many individuals illegally resident in the UK have been found to be in possession of forged Portuguese identity cards in the last 12 months. [207320]

Mr. Browne: The Immigration and Nationality Directorate's (IND's) National Document Fraud Unit (NDFU) leads the UK response to travel document abuse. In April 2004 NDFU co-ordinated an exercise at several UK ports of entry, focusing on abuse of Portuguese identity cards. This repeated earlier similar exercises. NDFU have also recently produced a guide to Portuguese documentation for the specific use of enforcement staff, who are responsible for identifying those in the UK unlawfully. Although statistics are not collated centrally in respect of the numbers of forged documents found in possession of those illegally in the UK, during the period 1 January 2004 to 30 November 2004, enforcement staff brought 108 forged Portuguese identity cards (out of a total of 141 forged identity cards from all EU nationalities) to the attention of NDFU. During the same period, 236 forged Portuguese identity cards were detected at UK ports of entry (of a total of 1,417 forged identity cards of all EU nationalities) and 21 forged Portuguese identity cards (of a total of 42) were detected at IND's Croydon offices.

Initiatives (Funding)

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what budget was allocated to the *(a)* Correctional Services Board, *(b)* National Offender Management Service, *(c)* Anti-Social Behaviour Action Group, *(d)* National Victims Advisory Panel, *(e)* Police Leadership Development Board, *(f)* National Asylum Support Forum, *(g)* Action Against Crime Business Group and *(h)* Sentencing Guidelines Council in each of the last two years; and how many staff each organisation employed in each year. [201729]

Paul Goggins: The information requested is as follows:

(a) The Correctional Services Board ceased to exist following the creation of the National Offender Management Service on 1 June 2004. It did not have a dedicated full-time staff, the secretariat function being met by Correctional Services staff. The Board's budget of £70,000 in the financial year 2003–04 was for the expenses of its non-executive members.

(b) The National Offender Management Service (NOMS) came into existence on 1 June 2004. The total budget for the elements that make up NOMS was £3.29 billion resource and £0.31 billion capital in April 2004. As the structure of NOMS has not been finalised it is not yet possible to give the number of staff employed.

(c) The Anti-Social Behaviour Action Group had a budget of £25 million in the financial year 2003–04 and £24 million in 2004–05. On average, the Group employed 27 staff.

(d) There was no formal budget allocation for the National Victims Advisory Panel in the financial year 2003–04, but £10,000 of its non-pay running costs was found from Home Office funds. There was a budget of £20,000 for 2004–05. The Panel does not have a dedicated secretariat. Four Home Office staff oversee the administration and running of the Panel, although this is only part of their work.

(e) The Police Leadership Development Board (PLDB) was established in 2001 and is chaired by HM Inspector of Constabulary. It oversees a programme of work to promote and develop effective leadership across the police service, which is delivered by the Home Office, the police service and its training and development providers. It has no budget or staff. Programme costs are met by the Home Office.

(f) The National Asylum Support Forum is a regular meeting at which representatives from key stakeholder groups discuss current and future issues in Asylum Support. Costs to the Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND) of contributing to not been finalised it is not yet possible to give the number of staff employed.

(g) The Anti-Social Behaviour Action Group had a budget of £25 million in the financial year 2003–04 and £24 million in 2004–05. On average, the Group employed 27 staff.

(h) The Sentencing Guidelines Council was appointed in March 2004, and shares a secretariat with the Sentencing Advisory Panel. The budget for the Council and Panel in the financial year 2003–04 was £0.546 million and during that time the Secretariat increased from three staff to the current level of 14 staff to support the new body. The budget allocated to the Council and Panel in 2004–05 is £0.909 million.

National Offender Management Service

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans have been developed for qualifications, training and career development for the National Offender Management Service. [204970]

Paul Goggins: Planning has begun on the creation of a learning and development strategy for National Offender Management Service (NOMS). Working closely with Skills for Justice (the Sector Skills Council for the justice sector) and regional probation training consortia, this strategy will identify new learning programmes and qualifications needed to support the development of NOMS.

As the offender management model is developed, a particular priority will be to define the competencies needed to undertake that role, and hence to develop learning programmes.

The Prison Service and the National Probation Service are also developing proposals for an integrated approach to leadership and management development for managers across NOMS. An early output will be the creation of a development programme for the 10 Regional Offender Managers.

Passports

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the timescale is for the inclusion of *(a)* facial, *(b)* fingerprint and *(c)* iris biometrics in passports. [206618]

Mr. Browne: The UK Passport Service currently plans to commence production of chip enabled passports containing a facial image by the last quarter in 2005.

We are at present considering the benefits and impacts of the possible introduction of fingerprint and/or iris biometrics. Unlike the facial biometrics, inclusion of either or both of these biometrics will require the personal attendance of all passport applicants. I have announced that adults applying for a passport for the first time will have to apply in person from the last quarter of 2006. However to require all applicants to apply in person and to record and store their additional biometrics would have a significant impact on UKPS operations and processes and a decision will not be taken on this until later in 2005.

Police

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many stop and accounts were undertaken by the police per day on average in the last period for which figures are available. [203510]

Ms Blears: There is no data currently held centrally on Stop and Account procedures. The requirement to record all stops in line with recommendation 61 of the Stephen Lawrence inquiry becomes effective on April 1 2005.

Prison Service

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the guidance set out in HM Treasury Green Book was followed in regard to the decision to reintroduce market testing to the Prison Service. [202690]

Paul Goggins: The guidance set out in Her Majesty's Treasury Green Book is to ensure that no programme is adopted without prior consideration of whether there are better ways of achieving the end result and better uses for the resources involved. In his report "Managing Offenders, Reducing Crime" published in December 2003 Lord Carter of Coles recommended that market testing should be reintroduced on the basis that contestability demonstrates value for money in the delivery of cost effective correctional services. The Government accepted this recommendation in its response published in January 2004 "Reducing Crime—Changing Lives". Value for money in respect of a prisons market test is demonstrated through the evaluation of bids submitted by the private and public sectors.

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many employees of the Prison Service have been disciplined for improper use of official cars since *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* 2001; [203641]

(2) how many prison officers have been disciplined since *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* 2001 for dishonest claims for travel allowances. [203651]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 9 December 2004]*: The information required is not held centrally and could be obtained only at a disproportionate cost.

Prisons

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prison cells were available for use at each prison establishment on the latest date for which figures are available; and how many prisoners could be housed in those cells. [206417]

Paul Goggins: The total number of prison cells and other accommodation is not recorded centrally. The standard unit of prison accommodation is the prison place, which includes cells, cubicles, dormitories, rooms or wards. When totalled, it represents the uncrowded capacity of a prison, or Certified Normal Accommodation (CNA).

The total number of prisoners that an establishment can hold in its accommodation is the prison's operational capacity. It is determined by area managers on the basis of operational judgement and experience, taking into account control, security and the proper operation of the planned regime.

Data on prison capacity in England and Wales, as at 26 November 2004 (the last date for which figures are available), is set out in the following table.

Prison	*CNA places*	*Operational capacity*
Acklington	882	882
Albany	526	526
Altcourse	614	1,024
Ashfield	300	300
Ashwell	535	545
Askham Grange	151	151
Aylesbury	356	372
Bedford	325	464
Belmarsh	792	921
Birmingham	100	1,400
Blakenhurst	641	880
Blantyre House	122	122
Blundeston	420	464
Brinsford	477	493
Bristol	426	606
Brixton	606	798
Brockhill	145	48
Bronzefield	451	451
BuckleyHall	350	385
Bullingdon	759	963
Bullwood Hall	180	184
Camp Hill	513	585
Canterbury	196	314
Cardiff	525	754
Castington	400	410
Channings Wood	634	667
Chelmsford	446	575
Coldingley	370	390
CookhamWood	12	168
Dartmoor	598	625
Deerbolt	513	518
Doncaster	771	1,120
Dorchester	143	250
Dovegate	858	858
Dover[1]	316	316
Downview	210	210
Drake Hall	315	315
Durham	552	787
East Sutton Park	94	100
Eastwood Park	310	346
Edmunds Hill	308	310
Elmley	763	985
Erlestoke	426	426
Everthorpe	437	469
Exeter	316	533
Featherstone	599	615
Feltham	761	761
Ford	541	541
Forest Bank	800	1,064
Foston Hall	267	274
Frankland	693	709
Full Sutton	596	608
Garth	633	667
Gartree	399	404
Glen Parva	668	808
Gloucester	229	328
Grendon	241	235
Guys Marsh	519	570
Haslar[1]	123	123
Haverigg	554	564
Hewell Grange	167	170
Highdown	643	747
Highpoint	792	816
Hindley	539	539
Hollesley Bay	330	330
Holloway	522	522
Holme House	857	994
Hull	812	1,071
Huntercombe	36	368
Kingston	138	140
Kirkham	588	590
Kirklevington	223	223
Lancaster	98	180
Lancaster Farms	480	527
Latchmere House	207	207
Leeds	806	1,254
Leicester	191	355
Lewes	442	529
Leyhill	508	508
Lincoln	307	490
Lindholme[1]	784	784
Littlehey	654	696
Liverpool	1,186	1,476
Long Lartin	442	442
Low Newton	343	396
Lowdham Grange	504	524
Maidstone	548	548
Manchester	954	1,269
Moorland	740	779
Moorland Open	260	260
Morton Hall	391	392
Mount	704	760

Prison	*CNA places*	*Operational capacity*
New Hall	367	426
North Sea Camp	307	307
Northallerton	153	254
Norwich	583	811
Nottingham	385	510
Onley	580	580
Parc	859	136
Parkhurst	459	507
Pentonville	889	1,205
Portland	447	472
Frescoed	160	170
Preston	331	62
Ranby	760	858
Reading	186	289
Risley	1038	1,073
Rochester	392	392
Rye Hill	600	664
Send	219	219
Shepton Mallet	163	189
Shrewsbury	168	300
Spring Hill	318	318
Stafford	680	680
Standford Hill	464	464
Stocken	595	622
Stoke Heath	574	690
Styal	406	457
Sudbury	551	559
Swaleside	756	778
Swansea	205	348
Swinfen Hall	431	440
Thorn Cross	316	31
Usk	150	250
Verne	552	587
Wakefield	561	565
Wandsworth	995	1,462
Warren Hill	222	222
Wayland	657	709
Wealstun	842	892
Weare	398	398
Wellingborough	516	526
Werrington	146	148
Wetherby	342	342
Whatton	341	360
Whitemoor	450	450
Winchester	437	655
Wolds	310	360
Woodhill	650	762
Wormwood Scrubs	1,167	1,239
Wymott	1,021	1,046

[1] Dover and Haslar in their entirety and 112 of Lindholme's places are designated Immigration Removal Centres (IRCs), which are managed by the Prison Service on behalf of Immigration and Nationality Directorate.

Private Finance Initiative

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many private finance initiative and public private partnership contracts with his Department have been won by subsidiaries of Halliburton in each year from 1997; what the terms were of each contract; and if he will make a statement. [205081]

Fiona Mactaggart: From the best information available, the Department has no such contracts.

Sex Abuse (Historical Cases)

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many and what percentage of historical sex abuse cases reviewed by the Criminal Cases Review Commission have been referred to the Court of Appeal due to *(a)* new evidence and *(b)* exceptional circumstances. [207325]

Paul Goggins: The Criminal Cases Review Commission has referred two cases of historical sex abuse to the Court of Appeal. There was new evidence in either of these cases. No such cases have been referred to the Court of Appeal because of exceptional circumstances.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many cases of historical sex abuse the Criminal Cases Review Commission have reviewed; and how many they are reviewing. [207327]

Paul Goggins: The Criminal Cases Review Commission has completed 15 reviews of historical sex abuse cases. It has eight under review at the moment and six waiting to be reviewed.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the Criminal Cases Review Commission has established a database on historical sex abuse cases in order to identify generic patterns. [207451]

Paul Goggins: The Criminal Cases Review Commission has established a database on historical sex abuse cases but does not consider that it has sufficient cases with which to identify generic patterns.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what changes the Criminal Cases Review Commission has suggested to police procedures in the light of its review of historic sex abuse cases. [207452]

Paul Goggins: The Criminal Cases Review Commission has not suggested any changes to police procedures in the light of its review of historic sex abuse cases.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the results of the co-operation between the Historical Abuse Appeal Panel and the Criminal Cases Review Commission. [207453]

Paul Goggins: There have been several meetings between representatives of the Commission and the Historical Abuse Appeal Panel. Relevant issues have been discussed and a protocol between the two organisations has been drafted.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many and what percentage of interviews with adult witnesses in historical sex abuse cases were recorded in each of the last 10 years. [207460]

Ms Blears: The information requested is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Stolen Property

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the property belonging to his Department that has *(a)* been stolen and *(b)* been reported lost in each year since 1997, broken down by type of article. [206363]

Fiona Mactaggart: There has been only one loss of £28.67 reported since 2001. Due to the low value of the item lost, this incident was not reported to the Police.

UK Citizenship

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether, under plans from his Department, all applicants for UK citizenship will have to prove that they can speak English regardless of how long they have lived in the UK. [207742]

Mr. Browne: The requirement that all those applying for naturalisation should provide evidence of language skills at or above, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Entry 3 came into force on 28 July 2004.

The requirement applies equally to all applicants irrespective of the time they have been resident in the UK. There is discretion to waive the requirement where it would be unreasonable to expect the applicant to fulfil it because of age or physical or mental condition.

Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will publish the results of the monitoring project on the effectiveness of limitations on cross examination about previous sexual history under section 41 of the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999. [207523]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 12 January 2005]*: We intend publishing a report on the evaluation of these provisions in late spring.

PRIME MINISTER

Appointments Commission

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Prime Minister what plans he has to seek further appointments by the House of Lords Appointments Commission; and if he will make a statement. [208376]

The Prime Minister: The Appointments Commission continues to consider nominations and I propose to ask them for further recommendations shortly.

Constitutional Treaty

John Cryer: To ask the Prime Minister what discussions he has had with the Electoral Commission regarding the proposed referendum on the Constitutional Treaty for the European Union. [208539]

The Prime Minister: None.

E-mails

Norman Baker: To ask the Prime Minister how many e-mails have been permanently deleted by his Office in each month since July 2004. [208723]

The Prime Minister: For these purposes my office is part of the Cabinet Office. I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Minster for the Cabinet Office (Mr. Miliband) today.

Engagements

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Prime Minister if he will list his engagements for February. [207981]

The Prime Minister: My official spokesman announces my future engagements as appropriate.

Global Warming (United States)

Harry Cohen: To ask the Prime Minister what progress he has made in his representations to the US Administration regarding that country's engagement in efforts to effectively tackle global warming; and if he will make a statement. [208736]

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, Southall (Mr. Khabra) at Prime Minister's questions on 17 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 1350.

Iraq

Alan Simpson: To ask the Prime Minister pursuant to the oral answer of 8 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1167, what the basis was for his claim that the United Nations appointed the interim Government in Iraq; and under what legal provision this appointment was made. [208378]

The Prime Minister: The Iraqi Interim Government (IIG), as outlined in the Transitional Administrative Law (TAL), was appointed by Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi (the then UN Secretary-General's special adviser on Iraq) after thorough consultations with Iraqis representing all Iraq's ethnic and sectarian groups and with the Coalition Provisional Authority. UN Resolution 1546 endorses the formation of the IIG, and its assumption of full responsibility and authority for Iraq following the transfer of authority in June. A national conference was held in August to elect an Advisory Council to oversee the performance of the IIG, whose structures and powers were enshrined in an annexe to the TAL.

Glenda Jackson: To ask the Prime Minister if he will commission an independent inquiry into the number of Iraqis *(a)* killed and *(b)* injured since March 2003. [208969]

Mr. Kilfoyle: To ask the Prime Minister if he will establish a comprehensive and independent inquiry into the number of Iraqi casualties since the invasion of March 2003. [209457]

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friends to the answer I gave the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Carmichael) at Prime Minister's questions on 8 December 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1166–67.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Prime Minister whether the contracts signed by his special advisers differ from the Model Contract for Special Advisers. [207230]

The Prime Minister: All special advisers are employed on contracts based on the Model Contract for Special Advisers. There is a provision in No. 10 for up to three special advisers to have executive powers. This would be reflected in their contract.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

"Awareness of Comprehensive Performance Assessment"

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will place in the Library a copy of the research study conducted by MORI for the Audit Commission entitled Awareness of Comprehensive Performance Assessment among the general public published in December 2002. [207920]

Mr. Raynsford: MORI conducted the survey entitled 'Awareness of Comprehensive Performance Assessment among the general public' on behalf of the Audit Commission. I have asked the Chief Executive of the Audit Commission to write to the hon. Member. Copies of his letter will be made available in the Libraries of both Houses.

Letter from Steve Bundred to Mrs. Caroline Spelman, dated 18 January 2005:

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has passed your parliamentary question to me for reply.

In 2002 MORI conducted a survey on our behalf entitled *Awareness of Comprehensive Performance Assessment among the general public*. The report was not made public, but I am pleased to enclose a copy for your use.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you need any further information about this survey report.

Beacon Councils

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what central Government expenditure on the beacon council scheme was in each year since its creation. [207916]

Mr. Raynsford: The beacon council scheme has been running since 1999 and is now in its sixth round. Estimated central Government expenditure on the previous five rounds is tabled as follows.

£ million

	Round 1	*Round 2*	*Round 3*	*Round 4*	*Round 5*
Reward Grant	0.7	1.7	1.7	3	3
Peer Support Grant	0	0	0	2	2
Panel Costs	0.450	0.190	0.185	0.190	0.190
Administration	0.150	0.250	0.230	0.240	0.235
Total	1.0	2.14	2.115	5.43	5.425

Council Tax

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the average band *(a)* A, *(b)* B, *(c)* G and *(d)* H council tax bills were in England in (i) 1997–98 and (ii) 2004–05. [208690]

Mr. Raynsford: The information requested is in the below.

£

	Average area council tax (two adults)			
Financial year	*Band A*	*Band B*	*Band G*	*Band H*
1997–98	459	535	1,147	1,376
2004–05	778	907	1,945	2,333

Departmental Credit Cards

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many credit cards for official expenditure are held by his Department. [206431]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was formed in May 2002. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister uses the Government procurement card (GPC) and corporate card. To date the total number of cards currently held by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is 220 of which 188 are GPC and 32 are corporate cards.

Apart from these, there are no other credit cards held within the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the cost of refurbishments in his Department was in each year since 1997; and what the planned expenditure is for 2005–06. [205671]

Yvette Cooper: For 2004–05 the estimated out-turn expenditure is £5,352,399. Of this £4,697,000 was spent on the Government offices.

In 2005–06 expenditure of £3,103,000 is planned. Of this £1,305,000 is to be spent on the Government offices and £440,000 on the Fire Service College. The planned spend on the offices of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister includes costs involved in re-planning parts of its accommodation to improve the occupational space density.

Although the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has overall responsibility for the buildings occupied by Government offices, they carry out functions on behalf of 10 Government Departments.

For information on previous years' expenditure I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State (Phil Hope) on 11 November 2004, *Official Report*, columns 842–43W.

Derelict Land

Norman Baker: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate he has made of the *(a)* number and *(b)* area of sites designated as derelict land, broken down by region. [208221]

Keith Hill: The National Land Use Database of Previously-Developed Land provides estimates which are tabled as follows.

Derelict land and buildings in England, 2003

	Number of sites reported by local authorities	*Estimated total area (hectares)*
North East	144	1,520
North West	1,250	5,700
Yorkshire and the Humber	457	3,160
East Midlands	416	1,950
West Midlands	447	1,730
East of England	233	2,420
London	90	370
South East	211	1,440
South West	360	2,250
England	3,608	20,550

Note:

The estimates of total areas include an allowance for incomplete reporting.

District Auditing

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the cost of *(a)* district audit and *(b)* district auditors in England in the current financial year; and whether this is included in the Audit Commission's annual expenditure. [207922]

Mr. Raynsford: This is an operational matter for the Audit Commission. I will ask the Chief Executive to write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Steve Bundred to Mrs. Caroline Spelman, dated 14 January 2005:

District Audit was amalgamated with the Audit Commission Inspection Service in November 2002. The costs of this combined activity identified in 2004–05 are £95.8 million for England and £13 million for Wales and are shown in our accounts. Allocating these costs between audit and inspection services would result in audit costs of £77.3 million for England and £10 million for Wales. These figures exclude support and management costs which are accounted for centrally. They also exclude the costs of audits conducted by the private firms appointed by us to audit around 30 per cent. of local authority and NHS bodies.

District Auditor is a grade of staff employed within the Audit Commission. The total cost, including all on costs but again excluding support and management costs, for this grade of staff for 2004–05 is £6.6 million.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you need any further information about this issue.

Fire and Rescue Services

Mr. Drew: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will publish in full the recent business case undertaken on behalf of his Department for proposals to abolish individual fire and rescue control centres. [208249]

Mr. Raynsford: A copy of the draft outline business case is already available on the web. http://www.firecontrol.odpm.gov.uk/.

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many fire appliances are proposed to be redeployed at night time away from their day time deployments under the draft Integrated Risk Management Plan documents published by fire and rescue authorities in England. [206068]

Mr. Raynsford: Examination of all Integrated Risk Management Plans has yet to be undertaken. Of those seen to date, none contain proposals to redeploy appliances at night time away from their day time locations.

Gypsy/Traveller Sites

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the registered social landlords involved in providing and managing sites for Gypsies and Travellers in the West Midlands. [207982]

Keith Hill: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not maintain a listing of those registered social landlords (RSLs) that are involved in the provision and management of Gypsy and Traveller sites.

The Government have stated their intention to extend the permissible purposes of the Housing Corporation, which will allow RSLs to obtain funding for the development and management of Gypsy and Traveller sites.

Homelessness (Swale)

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many homeless people in Swale have sought help from Swale borough council since 2001; and how many homeless people are accommodated by Swale borough council *(a)* within and *(b)* outside its boundary. [208872]

Yvette Cooper: Information collected about local authorities' actions under homelessness legislation is in respect of households, rather than persons. The total number of decisions reported by Swale borough council in respect of applications made by households during each year since 2000–01, and the number that were accepted as eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless and in priority need are tabled below. Also shown are the number of homeless households in temporary accommodation arranged by Swale BC as at the end of March each year, both within and outside its own boundary. Data are also shown for the first two quarters of 2004–05.

Homelessness activity[1] reported by Swale borough council

	Decisions[2] made on homelessness applications		*Households in temporary accommodation arranged[3] by local authorities, as at end year (31 March)*		
		of which:		*of which:*	
	Total	*Accepted*	*Total*	*inside district*	*outside district*
2000–01	444	315	36	36	0
2001–02	500	371	78	69	9
2002–03	566	336	112	84	28
2003–04	544	239	161	137	24
2004–05 (April-September)	254	125	[4]172	[4]150	[4]22

[1] Under homelessness legislation

[2] Decisions on applications from households eligible for assistance under the homelessness provisions of housing legislation. Excludes ineligible applications.

[3] Households in accommodation either pending a decision on their homelessness application or awaiting re-allocation of a settled home following acceptance. Excludes those households designated as "homeless at home" that have remained in their existing accommodation and have the same rights to suitable alternative accommodation as those in accommodation arranged by the authority.

[4] as at end September

Source:

ODPM P1E homelessness returns (quarterly)

After being accepted as homeless, a household will be placed in some form of accommodation. They may be placed in temporary accommodation, until a settled solution becomes available, or they may be given a settled solution straight away depending on the accommodation available to the local authority. As an alternative to temporary accommodation an authority may arrange for a household to remain in their current accommodation (homeless at home), until a settled solution becomes available.

Some of the households in temporary accommodation were being accommodated pending completion of enquiries into their application, or awaiting the outcome of an LA review/county court appeal against the authority's decision, or had been found intentionally homeless and subsequently were being accommodated for a reasonable period as permitted under legislation.

Information is also collected, since 1998, on the number of people who sleep rough, that is, those who are literally roofless on a single night. Swale borough council reported no persons sleeping rough in their district.

Quarterly Statistical Releases on statutory homelessness published by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister include information on decisions, and households in temporary accommodation, at local authority level in an associated Supplementary Table. The latest Release of, 13 December, and previous editions are available both in the Library of the House and via the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website.

Housing

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will publish regular aggregated information on the number of *(a)* social and *(b)* affordable homes planned by the regional housing boards. [208391]

Keith Hill: Decisions on the amount of regional housing pot funding to be used for provision of social rented and other affordable housing are taken in the light of advice from Regional Housing Boards. In announcing our decisions, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, will set out details of the regional spend totals and estimates of the numbers of homes to be provided, indicating where this varies from the Housing Board recommendations.

Housing Stock Transfers

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will commission a study on the merits of a levy on the profits of registered social landlords benefiting from large scale voluntary transfers, to be returned as a bonus to the community transferring its council housing. [207806]

Keith Hill: Registered social landlords (RSLs) are non-profit distributing businesses. Where an RSL has any operating surplus following the receipt of local authority housing stock, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister would expect this surplus to be used to further contribute towards the Government's sustainable communities strategy.

Living Spaces Programme

Ms Oona King: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) how many applications to the Living Spaces programme are awaiting a decision on funding; [209009]

(2) if he will list the schemes in Tower Hamlets that have *(a)* been granted funding from the Living Spaces programme and *(b)* are awaiting a decision on funding from the programme. [209010]

Phil Hope: 340 community groups are awaiting a decision on funding having applied to the Living Spaces programme. These groups have had their initial application approved and have been allocated a trained "enabler" who will help them to develop their proposed project and draw up an action plan as part of the project assessment process. Following recommendation from the enabler, the project assessment is submitted to Living Spaces for approval and successful groups are then offered a grant.

To date, three projects in Tower Hamlets have been granted funding from the Living Spaces programme. They are:

The Escape! project, which has been awarded a grant of £5,000 to create a community garden and improve access to the Cedar Community Centre on the Isle of Dogs.

The Attlee Youth and Community Centre project, which has been awarded a grant of £83,005 to provide a play area and sensory garden as part of a wider development project to improve facilities at the centre.

The Bromley by Bow Community Park project, which has been awarded a grant of £75,000 to improve facilities at the park and create a welcoming, safe green space for the community.

A further two community groups from Tower Hamlets have applied to Living Spaces. These groups have had their initial application approved and have since worked up their plans with the help of a Living Spaces enabler. Once Living Spaces receives a final recommendation from the enabler a decision on funding will be taken. The projects are:

The Bio Diverse and Tasty Landscaping project, which has applied for a grant of £23,026 to create a community garden on the basis of sustainable living at Spitalfields City Farm.

The Safe Links to Living Well project, which has applied for a grant of £20,000 to improve access to Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park by replacing neglected entrance gates with wheelchair-friendly kissing gates, and improve entrance areas with new planting.

Ross Cranston: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much has been spent in Dudley on the living spaces project in *(a)* 2003–04 and *(b)* 2004–05; what the money has been spent on; and if he will make a statement. [208043]

Phil Hope: To date no money has been spent in Dudley on the living spaces project. However one application for £25,000 is currently being processed. This is concerning work to the grounds of St. Thomas' Church in Stourbridge. The proposal is to improve access, seating and circulation, improved planting, the creation of a focal point sculpture and a welcoming new entrance feature.

Local Elections

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what recent estimate the Government have made of the cost of providing freepost mailings to candidates in local elections; and if he will make a statement. [207917]

Mr. Raynsford: Freepost mailing is not available to candidates in local elections, other than where a local authority choose to include this in an electoral pilot. There was one such pilot in Hyndburn in May 2002 where the Electoral Commission reported the cost to the council to be £10,000.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans the Government have to conduct future local elections, in whole or part, via remote electronic voting; and if he will make a statement. [207924]

Mr. Raynsford: As it was made clear in the response to the Electoral Commission's report, "Delivering democracy? The future of postal voting", laid before the House on 9 December 2004, the Government remain committed to the goal of multi-channel elections, in which voters choices will include e-voting channels. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's strategy for achieving this goal is to encourage local authorities to continue the programme of local electoral pilots, including remote e-voting.

Local Government Employees

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) when he will publish his Department's conclusions following its consultation on political restrictions on local government employees; [207925]

(2) which organisations responded to his Department's consultation paper on political restrictions on local government employees. [207926]

Mr. Raynsford: The nearly 400 respondents to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's recent consultation on a review of political restrictions on local government employees included principal authorities, parish councils, employers and employees representative bodies, the Standards Board for England, the Audit Commission, the Association of Council Secretaries and Solicitors, and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister intends to publish a summary of responses, and our proposals on next steps, in the spring.

Local Government Finance

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what incentives are provided to local authorities to increase the rate of *(a)* council tax and *(b)* business rate collection; and if he will make a statement. [207919]

Mr. Raynsford: If a billing authority exceeds its estimated council tax collection rate, then any surplus is shared with the precepting authorities and can be used to fund future expenditure or keep down the council tax. There is no equivalent incentive with business rates collection.

In addition Best Value Performance Indicators 9 and 10 respectively measure the in- year collection rate for council tax and business rates and this is taken into account in the Comprehensive Performance Assessment process.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what proportion of local government revenue expenditure in England was financed by council tax in each year from 1996–97; and what the estimated proportion for 2005–06 is. [207966]

Mr. Raynsford: The proportion of local government revenue expenditure financed by council tax in England each year from 1996–97 is tabled as follows.

	Council tax as a percentage of local government revenue expenditure
1996–97	22
1997–98	24
1998–99	25
1999–2000	25
2000–01	25
2001–02	25
2002–03	25
2003–04	26
2004–05	26

The data are as reported by local authorities and are taken from outturn figures for 1996–97 to 2002–03 and budget estimates for 2003–04 and 2004–05. The figures shown are gross of council tax benefit.

Data are not yet available for 2005–06.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister for what reasons his Department did not use 2001 census data for the Local Government Finance Settlement 2005–06. [209189]

Mr. Raynsford: I announced on 21 July 2004, *Official Report,* column 30WS, that the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister would not be using the 2001 Census data in the 2005–06 settlement. This is because it would have been technically incorrect to have simply introduced the data without first amending the statistical models underlying the Formula Spending Share formulae. Changing the formulae in this way would have broken the three year formula freeze to which we are pledged in order to provide funding stability for authorities.

Further research is being undertaken on the formula changes needed to incorporate the 2001 Census data into the Formula Spending Share formulae for a number of services, in particular Personal Social Services and police. This research should conclude in time to allow us to introduce the 2001 Census data in 2006–07, after the formula freeze has ended.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when his Department will issue guidance on how capping should be applied. [209190]

Mr. Raynsford: Legislation requires that capping decisions are based on principles determined by my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister as First Secretary of State. In reaching his decisions, he must make a comparison between an authority's budget requirement with that of a previous year. He can also determine other principles, such as increases in council tax. My right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister intends to determine his capping principles once authorities have set their 2005–06 budget requirements.

The Government have delivered another good settlement for local government, which will ensure that authorities can provide a high level of service. There is no excuse for excessive council tax increases. We have made it clear that we expect to see an average council tax increase of less than 5 per cent. in England in 2005–06, and that we will take even tougher capping action in 2005–06 than we did in 2004–05 if that proves necessary. It is the responsibility of local authorities to budget prudently.

Local Government Inspection

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the inspection bodies that inspect and regulate local government in England. [207923]

Mr. Raynsford: The following bodies carry out inspections within local authorities in England:

Audit Commission (including the Housing Inspectorate)

Benefit Fraud Inspectorate

Office for Standards in Education

Commission for Social Care Inspection

Adult Learning Inspectorate

HM Inspectorate of Probation (Inspection of Youth Offending Teams)

Food Standards Agency

Health and Safety Executive

Office of the Surveillance Commissioner.

Local Government Ombudsman

Mr. Bill O'Brien: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many cases where the local government ombudsman decision has been challenged on maladministration have been referred to the courts in each of the last 10 years. [207983]

Mr. Raynsford: Information on cases for years prior to 2001 has not been retained by the ombudsman, and hence could be provided only at disproportionate cost. Numbers of cases which have been referred for judicial review, and their outcome, for each complete financial year since 2001 are tabled as follows:

	2001–02	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
Number of cases referred	11	7	7
Number of cases where ombudsman's decision was upheld	11	7	7

Mobile Telephone Masts

Chris Ruane: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many mobile phone base stations are within *(a)* 100 metres, *(b)* 300 metres and *(c)* 500 metres of a school. [208074]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not hold the information requested centrally and could provide it only at disproportionate cost.

Planning

Dr. Pugh: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the change in the number of planning appeals has been in the last three years. [207883]

Keith Hill: The information requested, which has been extracted from the Planning Inspectorate's Annual Report and Accounts, is tabled as follows:

Planning appeal receipts—England

2000–01	15,336
2001–02	16,776
2002–03	18,554
2003–04	22,550

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what was the estimated aggregate revenue from planning fees in England for each year since 1996–97. [207928]

Keith Hill: Aggregated receipts to local planning authorities for planning applications in England for the financial years 1996–97 to 2003–04 are tabled as follows.

	£ million
1996–97	110
1997–98	132
1998–99	132
1999–2000	135
2000–01	142
2001–02	144
2002–03	173
2003–04	187

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans the Government has to change the level of planning delivery grant in the financial years following 2005–06; and if he will make a statement. [207929]

Keith Hill: As announced in the Spending Review settlement, £255 million has been allocated to Planning Delivery Grant for 2006–7 and 2007–8.

Regional Assemblies

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what criteria he takes into account when determining whether or not an elected regional assembly would be appropriate for a region. [209294]

Mr. Raynsford: The reasons why the Government proposed that some regions would proceed to a referendum on establishing an elected assembly were set out in my right hon.. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister's statement to Parliament of 16 June 2003, *Official Report*, columns 21–23. The accompanying documentation—

"Your Region, Your Say"—is available at: http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_regions/documents/page/odpm_regions_023485.hcsp

Following the north east referendum, my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister informed Parliament on 8 November 2004, *Official Report*, columns 587–89, that the Government would not be introducing the Regional Assemblies Bill and would not be proceeding with referendums in Yorkshire and the Humber and the North West.

Regional Government Referendum

John Cryer: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) what guidance was issued to civil servants in his Department regarding their activities prior to and during the referendum on the North East Regional Assembly; [208561]

(2) what steps he took to ensure that information provided by his Department prior to the North East Regional Assembly referendum was politically neutral. [208562]

Mr. Raynsford: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given in the other place by my right hon. Friend Lord Rooker on 2 December 2004, *Official Report, House of Lords*, column 17WA. The guidance is also available on the Cabinet Office website at: http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/propriety_and_ethics/publications/pdf/nerarg.pdf

Information provided by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in respect of the North East Regional Assembly referendum was prepared in accordance with the requirements of Guidance on the Work of the Government Information and Communication Service. These requirements can be seen at: http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/propriety_and_ethics/civil_service/government_information_service/index.asp

Regional Spacial Strategy

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when the regional spatial strategies will be finalised for each region. [207930]

Keith Hill: Section 1 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 provides that for each of the regions outside London there should be a regional spatial strategy (RSS). On commencement of the Act the Secretary of State, my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister prescribed which regional planning guidance should become the RSS for each region. Thereafter, the Regional Planning Body (RPB) will prepare a draft revision of the RSS when it is necessary or expedient to do so. The timetable for finalising a draft revision is agreed between the Regional Planning Body and the Government Office. The latest estimated issue dates of the final RSS for revisions currently in process are tabled. It must be stressed that these are indicative dates only.

RSS Region	*Estimated publication date of RSS revision*	*Type of Review*
East of England	December 2006	Full Review.
East Midlands	March 2005	Partial Review—Employment land, transport, retail hierarchy, waste, minerals, freight, environmental strategy for the northern coalfields, renewable energy, regional impacts of changes in information and communications technology.
North East	December 2006	Full Review
South East	Summer 2005	Partial Review—Waste & Minerals.
South East	Early 2007	Full Review.
North West	Autumn 2005	Partial Review—climate change, renewable energy and energy efficiency, waste management, aggregate minerals, strategically and locally important views, regional park resources
North West	Spring 2007	Full Review.
Yorkshire and The Humber	Late 2006	Full Review.
Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy	March 2005	Sub regional detail on the nature, possible extent, and location of housing growth in the Milton Keynes South Midlands area.

Residential Rates

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what methodology was used to calculate local authority residential rates in England prior to their abolition. [207972]

Mr. Raynsford: Each unit of property was given a rateable value using a valuation, which for domestic property was usually based on rental evidence just prior to 1973 when the last revaluation on this basis was undertaken. Every year, district and London borough councils would make a general rate to meet the difference between the total of anticipated expenditure (including sums payable to other authorities by way of precepts) less any other income. The rate was expressed in pence per pound sterling. The rates payable were calculated by multiplying this poundage by the rateable value. Rates on domestic property were reduced by a domestic rate relief scheme and could be further reduced by national or local rate rebate schemes.

Right to Buy

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the effect of changes in the Right to Buy discounts and floors on take-up of the Right to Buy; and if he will make a statement. [207990]

Keith Hill: The School for Policy Studies, University of Bristol and the Centre for Urban and Regional Studies, University of Birmingham, carried out a thorough assessment of the impact of the changes to Right to Buy discounts that took effect in February

1999. Copies were placed in the Libraries of both Houses in May 2003. The report is also available on the website of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, at: http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_housing/documents/page/odpm_house_023293.hcsp

In March 2003, the Government reduced the maximum Right to Buy discount available to tenants in 41 areas in London and the South of England that appeared to be under the greatest housing market pressure in terms of high levels of homelessness and high property prices. It is keeping under review the position on maximum discounts generally.

Shared Ownership Schemes

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what central Government funding has been provided to shared ownership schemes in England in each year since 1992. [207987]

Keith Hill: The information about what central Government funding has been provided to shared ownership schemes in England in each year since 1992 is being collated. I will write to the hon. Member with the relevant information and place a copy of the letter in the Library of the House once the information is collated.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what changes his Department has made to the provision of shared ownership schemes in England since May 1997. [207989]

Keith Hill: 30,000 shared ownership units were provided between 1997 and 2004, largely funded by the Housing Corporation through grants to registered social landlords.

Since 1997 the Government has:

from 1999, refocused the shared ownership programme on areas of greatest housing need in line with regional and local housing strategies and investment priorities;

from 1999, replaced the Do-it-Yourself Shared ownership (DIYSO) model in the Housing Corporation's programme with the Homebuy equity loan scheme;

from 2004, expanded shared ownership through the Key Worker Living Programme, with £72 million being spent on schemes in 2004–05;

through the Housing Act 2004, provided for developers and others to receive grant from the Housing Corporation for the provision of affordable housing, including shared ownership properties, and enabled social landlords to include a right of first refusal in their leases when the shared owner wishes to sell;

enabled improvements to shared ownership leases in 2004, following the recommendations of the Home Ownership Task Force, including allowing shared owners to staircase up to full ownership in smaller 10 per cent. tranches; and

increased funding through the Housing Corporation's Approved Development Programme from £106 million in 1997–98 to £227 million in 2003–04. The Spending Review 2004 funding, together with efficiency savings, will provide 40,000 homes for essential public sector workers and low cost home ownership (including shared ownership) over the three years to 2007–08;

South East England Development Agency

Tim Loughton: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much has been spent by the South East England Development Agency on redeveloping the Ropetackle site in Shoreham-by-Sea, West Sussex. [208665]

Keith Hill: To date the South East England Development Agency have spent £3,421,562 on land acquisition, substantial remediation, disturbance payments and professional fees.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what arrangements are in place for a profit share between the South East England Development Agency and the developers Berkeley Group for the disposal proceeds of properties on the Ropetackle site in Shoreham-by-Sea, West Sussex. [208666]

Keith Hill: The transaction with Berkeley Homes is on the basis of a 50:50 split of all land value coverage above a Guaranteed Minimum Land Value calculated on completion of the development.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the anticipated net financial expenditure income is to the South East England Development Agency when all the disposals of properties on the Ropetackle site in Shoreham-by-Sea, West Sussex, have been completed. [208667]

Keith Hill: The anticipated net income from the development to South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) is £1,733,123.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the original budget for the development of the Ropetackle Site in Shoreham-by-Sea, West Sussex was, when acquired by the South East England Development Agency. [208668]

Keith Hill: The original budget for the development of the Ropetackle site was £2,857,700.

This has since increased to £3,421,562.

The development of an enterprise gateway at Ropetackle is a subsequent separate project approved by the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) at a cost of £2.86 million.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much was paid by the South Eastern England Development Agency to *(a)* Adur council and *(b)* private landowners on acquisition of the Ropetackle site in Shoreham-by-Sea, West Sussex; and what conditions were attached. [208669]

Keith Hill: The information is as follows:

(a) A cash sum was paid to Adur DC on condition that the South Eastern England Development Agency (SEEDA) bore the substantial cost of remediating the contaminated Ropetackle site and, in addition, undertook, under a section 106 agreement, to provide a community/arts facility within the development, completed to shell finish and in a state for fitting out.

(b) £301,000 has currently been paid to various third party land interests. Two of these are still subject to final compensation settlements which may be referred to the Lands Tribunal at a future date.

Telecommunication Masts

Joan Ruddock: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will revise the information on telecommunication masts on his Department's website to take account of the advice of Sir William Stewart. [209156]

Yvette Cooper: The Government have welcomed the timely review undertaken by the National Radiological Protection Board which was published on 11 January. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is studying the recommendations and will respond once we have considered them fully. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website will be updated as necessary in light of that response.

Joan Ruddock: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what his policy is on the siting of telecommunication masts, including those serving the emergency services; and what account this policy takes of the precautionary principle. [209157]

Yvette Cooper: Current planning guidance for all electronic communication developments, including those for the emergency services, is set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 8 (revised) (PPG8). The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has also issued a Code of Best Practice on Mobile Phone Network Development.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's policy is based on the precautionary approach to the siting of mobile phone base stations recommended by the Independent Expert Group on Mobile Phones in 2000. This includes ensuring all base stations meet the international guidelines on public exposure set by the International Commission on Non-Ionising Radiation Protection (ICNIRP).

Chris Ruane: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many *(a)* single company use and *(b)* multiple company use mobile telephone masts have been erected. [208656]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not hold information requested centrally and this could be obtained only at a disproportionate cost.

However, figures provided to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister by the Mobile Operators' Association record that as at 30 September 2004 the total number of ground-based masts in the UK was 19,624. 4,291 of those had one or more sharer present.

Use Classes Order

Alan Simpson: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans his Department has to introduce in England measures equivalent to the Use Classes Order in Northern Ireland. [208395]

Keith Hill: The Use Classes Order classifies dwelling houses as a C3 use class. This includes dwelling houses used by a single person, any number of persons living as a family, or by no more than six people living together as a single household. At present the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has no plans to amend the Use Classes Order in respect of the C3 class.

CABINET OFFICE

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how much her Department spent on *(a)* indoor bought plants, *(b)* indoor hired plants, *(c)* outdoor bought plants and *(d)* outdoor hired plants in each year since 1997. [205624]

Mr. Miliband: The available information on the costs of indoor and outdoor plants for the Cabinet Office is shown in the table.

	£000
2002–03	31,516
2003–04	44, 901

These costs include the supply and maintenance of the plants.

It is not possible to provide information for all of the Cabinet Office Estate for previous years as this is not held centrally and can only be provided at disproportionate costs.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office (1) what the cost of travel within the UK for the Cabinet Office was in each year since 1997; and how much of this was spent on *(a)* hire cars, *(b)* helicopter hire, *(c)* hotel accommodation and *(d)* subsistence; [206481]

(2) how much the Department spent on first class travel in each year since 1997. [206567]

Mr. Miliband: The Department does not record expenditure on travel within its accounting system in the format requested. Therefore, this information can be obtained only at disproportionate costs.

For information on the overall cost of travel for the Cabinet Office since 1997, I refer the hon. Member to the response I gave the hon. Member for New Forest East (Dr. Lewis) today.

All official travel in my Department is undertaken strictly in accordance with the rules contained in the Cabinet Office Management Code. All ministerial travel is undertaken fully in accordance with the rules set out in the Ministerial Code and Travel by Ministers, copies of which are available in the Libraries of the House.

Duchy of Lancaster

Simon Hughes: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many people are employed in the Duchy, broken down by grade; and if he will make a statement. [208060]

Mr. Milburn: The Duchy of Lancaster is not a Government Department and as such does not have a grading system. The Duchy of Lancaster employs the following:

	Number
Head Office staff	8
Survey staff	7
Magistracy and Savoy Chapel	4

This is one extra from the information provided under Note 6b of the Parliamentary Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2004.

Electronic Devices

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many electronic devices are owned by the Department, broken down by type. [207680]

Mr. Miliband: The information requested cannot be provided without incurring disproportionate cost.

E-mail

Mr. Maude: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what plans he has to introduce an automatic e-mail notification facility for announcements and publications issued by his Office and those public bodies reporting to him. [203686]

Mr. Milburn: The Duchy of Lancaster office has no plans to introduce an automatic e-mail notification facility for announcements and publications as it has no public bodies reporting to it.

Norman Baker: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many e-mails have been permanently deleted by his Office in each month since July 2004. [208676]

Mr. Miliband: It is not possible to determine the number of e-mails deleted by the Cabinet Office in each month since July 2004. Guidance issued from the Head of the Home Civil Service to all departments in July 2004 provided a clear cross-departmental approach to the handling of e-mail correspondence, and a copy is available in the Libraries of the House.

Stolen Property

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office if he will list the property belonging to his Office that has been *(a)* stolen and *(b)* reported lost in each year since 1997, broken down by type of article. [206377]

Mr. Miliband: There have been no recorded cases of stolen property in my Department since 1997.

Details of lost property since 1997 are shown in the table.

Lost Property

		£000
1997–98	No cases	—
1998–99	IT equipment	10,633
1999–2000	Audio visual equipment	1,385
	Communications equipment	370
	Stores items	200
Total		1,955
2000–01	Communications equipment	118
2001–02	No cases	—
2002–03	Office machinery	4,700
	Communications equipment	139
Total		4,839
2003–04	Communications equipment	1,170

Temporary Civil Servants

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what his Department's policy is on the routing of telephone calls intended for temporary civil servants who have left government service. [205453]

Mr. Miliband *[holding answer 20 December 2004]*: The Cabinet Office policy is not to route telephone calls intended for temporary civil servants who have left government service.

Travel Costs

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what the total travel costs to her Department have been for *(a)* Ministers, *(b)* special advisers and *(c)* officials for each year since 1997. [203785]

Mr. Miliband *[holding answer 9 December 2004]*: Since 1999, the Government publishes, on an annual basis, the total costs of all ministerial overseas travel and a list of all visits by Cabinet Ministers costing in excess of £500. Copies of the lists are available in the Library of the House. Details on the costs of Ministers' domestic travel are not held centrally and can be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

The travel costs for special advisers who accompany their Ministers overseas are included in the annual list on Overseas Travel by Cabinet Ministers. Other travel costs for special advisers are included in the overall spend on travel by the Cabinet Office, and are not separately identifiable.

The overall amount spent on travel for the Cabinet Office from 1997 to date, is shown in the table.

	£ million
1997–98	680, 730.61
1998–99	1,346,791.19
1999–2000	1,426,056.48
2000–01	1,710,250.17
2001–02	2,028,659.80
2002–03	2,268,693.03
2003–04	1,994,814.40

All official travel in the Department is undertaken strictly in accordance with the rules contained in the Cabinet Office Management Code. All ministerial travel is undertaken fully in accordance with the rules set out in the Ministerial Code and Travel by Ministers, copies of which are available in the Libraries of the House

Volunteering (Fiscal Incentives)

Mr. Drew: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the promotion of volunteering through the use of fiscal incentives for *(a)* individual volunteers and *(b)* employers. [204906]

Mr. Milburn: The Government are keen to see people get more active in the community and this is why my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister issued a challenge in March 2000 to encourage employers and their employees to give time to voluntary and community activities.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Community Legal Service

Ross Cranston: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what his most recent estimate is of the amount spent on civil (non-criminal) law by the community legal service, as a percentage of the total expenditure on legal services in the UK economy. [208052]

Mr. Lammy: During 2003–04 expenditure on the community legal service represented an estimated 4.7 per cent. of the legal services market in the UK during the same period.

Corporal Punishment

Mr. Dawson: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs whether corporal punishment of children has been prohibited by legislation in each of the UK Crown dependencies *(a)* as a sentence of the courts and as a form of punishment in penal institutions for young offenders, *(b)* in schools, including private schools, *(c)* in other institutions and forms of care and *(d)* by parents in the home. [208163]

Mr. Lammy: Corporal punishment of children may not be imposed by the courts and is prohibited either by legislation or as a matter of policy in penal and care institutions in all the Crown dependencies. The use of corporal punishment by parents in the home is similar to that in England and Wales, in that reasonable chastisement is permitted.

In Jersey, the Education (Jersey) Law 1999 provides that the Education Committee may issue a statement of general principles and guidance. On 10 December 1986, the committee issued guidance that corporal punishment is not to be administered in schools and other institutions. The head teachers of all private schools are required to comply with the Education Committee's guidance as a condition of their registration or grant funding. Therefore all Jersey schools are obliged not to use corporal punishment.

In Guernsey, by a Directive made under the Education (Guernsey) Law, 1970, corporal punishment is not permitted in schools controlled by the Education Department. Private schools in Guernsey are licensed and inspected by the Education Department. They have all discontin[illegible] use of corporal punishment.

In the Isle of Man, the Education Act 2001 (of Tynwald) provides that corporal punishment may not be imposed as penalty on a pupil for misbehaviour in a school provided or maintained by the Department of Education. The Department of Education does not have any power to prohibit corporal punishment in independent schools, however the one such school in the Isle of Man is a member of the Independent Schools Council which has banned the use of corporal punishment and hence it is not used on the island.

Freepost Election Mailings

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the total cost to public funds was of providing freepost mailings to candidates in the *(a)* 1997 general election, *(b)* 2001 general election and *(c)* 2004 European parliamentary elections. [207951]

Mr. Leslie: The cost to the Consolidated Fund of the delivery of candidates' election communications was as follows:

	Cost to consolidated fund (£)
(a) 1997 general election	20,775,582.64
(b) 2001 general election	17,651,256.19
(c) 2004 European parliamentary elections	25,896,235.82

Press Officers

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many press officers are employed in the Department. [206523]

Mr. Lammy: At 1 April 2004, my Department employed 14 press officers.

Stolen Property

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs (1) if he will list the property belonging to his Department that has *(a)* been stolen and *(b)* been reported lost in each year since 1997, broken down by type of article; [206368]

(2) how many items of civil service property within his Department are unaccounted for, broken down by type. [205574]

Mr. Lammy: The information requested is as in the following table.

Financial year	*Items stolen/lost by type of article*
1997–98	
Colour TV and file server	1
Laptop	5
PC mouse	2
Pocket memo recorder	1
TV/video	2
Video recorder	3
1998–99	
Laptop	3
Printer	1
Printer cables	1
Safe and laser printer	1
Specialist phone	1
1999–2000	
Keyboard and Printer	1
Laptop	1
Mobile phone	1
Payphone	1
PC	2
2000–01	
Cashbox	1
Laptop	1
Mobile phone	2
Tape recorder	1

Financial year	Items stolen/lost by type of article
2001–02	
Conference Phone	1
Laptop	12
Machines	1
Mobile	1
PC	1
Server	1
Telephone	1
2002–03	
Laptop	1
Lost mobile phone	1
PC	2
Stolen camera	1
Stolen computer	1
Stolen Epsom printer	1
Theft of CCTV camera	1
2003–04	
PC	2
Laptop	1
2004–05 (to date)	
Laptop	2

WORK AND PENSIONS

Benefit Fraud

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many and what percentage of benefit fraud cases he estimates would be caught by the use of identity cards. [209030]

Mr. Pond: I refer my right hon. Friend to the written answer I gave the right hon. Member for Haltemprice and Howden (David Davis) on 21 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1723W.

Benefit Rates

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people who have been in hospital for more than a year live on the weekly benefit rate of £15.90; and what proportion suffer from mental ill-health. [207736]

Malcolm Wicks: The information is not available in the format requested. However, such information as is available is set out in the table:

Benefit type	Number of people on adjusted personal benefit rate
State pension and bereavement benefits	[1]7,030
Severe disablement allowance	8,000
Income support	3,500
Incapacity benefit	3,500

[1] This figure is an average of the September 2003 and March 2004 figures and includes approximately 2,100 recipients of pension credit.

Notes:

1. Figures for the number of people receiving state pension, in hospital over 52 weeks are from a 5 per cent. sample from the pensions strategy computer system at 30 September 2003 and 31 March 2004. pension credit figures are based on the proportion of the pensioner population who receive pension credit, as no data are currently available for those in hospital longer than one year.
2. Disability living allowance and attendance allowance are not paid if the benefit recipient is in hospital over four weeks, so have not been included. The unemployment supplement in industrial injuries disablement benefit is downrated but there are few cases where this applies and no cases where hospital downrating has been recorded.
3. The incapacity benefit/severe disablement allowance admin data are from the Incapacity Benefit/Severe Disablement Allowance Quarterly Summary Statistics (four quarterly averages have been used) and the income support data are from the Income Support Quarterly Statistical Enquiry.

Child Poverty

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many and what percentage of children in poverty have been lifted out of poverty in each of the last seven years, broken down by *(a)* constituency, *(b)* county and *(c)* region. [207714]

Mr. Pond: Poverty is about more than low income; it also impacts on the way people live—their health, housing and the quality of their environment. The sixth annual "Opportunity for all" report (Cm 6239), published in September 2004, sets out the Government's strategy for tackling poverty and social exclusion and presents information on the indicators used to measure progress against this strategy.

Specific information regarding low income for the United Kingdom is available in "Households Below Average Income 1994–95 to 2002–03". Data are not available below the regional level and are only available as proportions at the regional level. It should be noted that the reporting of year on year changes in the regional low-income rates are not reliable.

"Measuring child poverty", published in December 2003, outlines the Government's measure of UK child poverty for the long-term. This new measure will begin from 2004–05.

All publications listed are available in the Library.

Departmental Credit Cards

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many credit cards for official expenditure are held by his Department. [206443]

Maria Eagle: As of 21 December 2004, there are 184 credit cards in issue for official expenditure.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the cost of travel within the UK for the Department was in each year since 1997; and how much of this was spent on *(a)* hire cars, *(b)* helicopter hire, *(c)* hotel accommodation and *(d)* subsistence. [206477]

Maria Eagle: The information is not available in the format requested. The available information is in the table. DWP was formed in June 2001 from Department of Social Security (DSS) and parts of the former Department for Education and Employment, including the Employment Service. Information for the period prior to June 2001 refers to the former DSS.

£

	Hire cars	Hotel accommodation	Subsistence
1997–1998	869,206	—	9,494,120
1998–1999	1,231,625	—	10,325,573
1999–2000	1,265,559	—	10,629,555
2000–2001	1,670,054	—	16,364,631
2001–2002	1,977,780	11,823,786	6,537,830
2002–2003	1,820,212	12,945,939	4,447,904
2003–2004	2,006,136	13,230,046	4,141,234

Notes:

1. Information provided includes travel costs for both Ministers and civil servants
2. Separate information for hotel accommodation and subsistence costs is only available from 2001–2002. For previous years, hotel accommodation costs are included within subsistence costs.
3. There were no costs for helicopter hire.
4. All travel complied with the requirements of the Ministerial Code, Travel by Ministers and the Civil Service Management Code.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much the Department spent on first-class travel in each year since 1997. [206563]

Maria Eagle: The available information is in the table.

Cost of first-class travel

	Number of journeys	Cost (£)
2002–03	51,564	8,315,975
2003–04	45,289	7,082,711

Notes:

1. Information provided includes travel by both Ministers and civil servants.
2. Information is not available for the period prior to 2002–03.
3. The figures refer to first class rail travel in the UK and abroad. No first-class air journeys were made.
4. All travel complied with the requirements of the Ministerial Code, Travel by Ministers and the Civil Service Management Code.
5. Information relating to overseas travel by Ministers is published on an annual basis. Information for the period 2 May 1997 to 31 March 2004 is in the Library. Information on the financial year 2004–05 will be published as soon as possible at the end of the current financial year.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many overseas trips, and at what total cost, have been made by his Department in each year since 1997; and what the costs of *(a)* flights, *(b)* internal travel, *(c)* hotel accommodation and *(d)* subsistence were of each trip. [206662]

Maria Eagle: The available information is in the tables.

Overseas Travel for 2002–2003

£

	Journeys/nights	Cost
Overseas air travel	736	600,572
Overseas hotels	415	46,566
Overseas rail travel	430	43,676
Ferry travel	79	6,385
Overseas Travel for 2003–04		
Overseas air travel	974	637,383
Overseas hotels	554	53,274
Overseas rail travel	625	57,06[illegible]
Ferry travel	272	26,105

Notes:

1. The information provided includes travel by both Ministers and civil servants.
2. Information is not available for the period prior to 2002–03 or for individual journeys.
3. All travel complied with the requirements of the Ministerial Code, Travel by Ministers and the Civil Service Management Code.
4. Information relating to overseas travel by Ministers is published on an annual basis. Information for the period 2 May 1997 to 31 March 2004 is in the Library. Information on the financial year 2004–05 will be published as soon as possible at the end of the current financial year.

Disability Discrimination Act

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what plans there are to regulate compliance with the obligations of part 3 of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995; [207838]

(2) what assessment has been made of disabled people's access to goods, services and facilities as a result of the introduction of part 3 of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 from 1 October 2004. [207839]

Maria Eagle: We have no plans to regulate compliance with the duties under part 3 of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 beyond the enforcement provisions which are already in place in section 25 of the Act. A disabled person who believes that he or she has been unlawfully discriminated against in access to goods, facilities, services and premises may take civil proceedings against the service provider or the person responsible for the selling, letting or managing of premises.

Before considering civil proceedings, the disabled person may raise a complaint directly with the service provider, or the person responsible for the disposal of premises, to see whether the issue can be resolved to the satisfaction of both parties. The disabled person may also wish to seek advice from the Disability Rights Commission (DRC) which has established an independent conciliation service for disputes arising under part 3 of the DDA, with a view to promoting the settlement of disputes without recourse to civil proceedings. The DRC also has statutory duties to monitor and keep under review the implementation and enforcement of the DDA, and to advise the Government on the operation of the Act.

No assessment has yet been made since 1 October 2004 of the impact of the new duties requiring service providers to tackle physical barriers that prevent disabled people accessing their goods, services and facilities. However, the Government have a programme of research to monitor how those with responsibilities under the DDA are responding to those duties. Research conducted in 2003 and published in 2004 (DWP Research Report 202, Disability in the Workplace: Employers' and Service Providers' Responses to the Disability Discrimination Act in 2003 and Preparation for 2004 Changes) showed that 56 per cent. of the service providers surveyed had changes to physical access in place or planned. Future research will include further assessments of the adjustments made to improve access for disabled people to goods, services and facilities.

Disability Living Allowance

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what plans he has to *(a)* introduce a winter heating allowance for claimants in receipt of disability living allowance and *(b)* introduce free TV licences for claimants in receipt of disability living allowance; and if he will make a statement. [208651]

Malcolm Wicks: There are no plans to extend the winter fuel payment to people under age 60 in receipt of disability living allowance. Nor has the Government plans at present to extend the availability of free television licences but is considering all aspects of BBC funding, including concessions, as part of the BBC Charter review process.

National Insurance

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people with a full employment record have been disallowed *(a)* sickness benefits, *(b)* incapacity benefits, *(c)* jobseeker's allowance and *(d)* income support supplementary benefit because they did not have adequate NI contributions over the last three years. [206922]

Maria Eagle: Incapacity benefit and contribution based jobseeker's allowance are the only working age benefits dependent on national insurance contributions.

Contribution based benefits are intended to help those who experience periods of unemployment or sickness between jobs. Entitlement to these benefits relies upon a claimant having sufficient national insurance contributions in the two most recent tax years for which records are available. This rule reinforces the link with the labour market and strikes the right balance between ensuring people do not need a long work history to be entitled, while denying access for those who have not been in the labour market for a number of years.

Information regarding the previous employment record of claimants that failed the contribution condition is available only at disproportionate cost.

National Insurance Rebates

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions for what reason rates of age-related national insurance rebates for members of appropriate personal pensions have been reduced since 2002–03. [208277]

Malcolm Wicks: There has been no such reduction. The rates set for the period 2002–03 to 2006–07 constitute an increase in the overall cost of the rebate for all forms of contracting out of around £11 billion over the preceding five year period.

Pensions

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what calculations his Department has made concerning at what age *(a)* a man and *(b)* a woman with (i) half average earnings and (ii) average earnings, with a stakeholder pension with charges of 1 per cent. of premiums which tracks movements in the stock market, should contract in to the state second pension if he makes assumptions about his life expectancy, stock market growth and other economic variables in line with those made by the Government Actuary's Department. [208161]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 13 January 2005]:* It is for individuals to decide the point at which it would be in their best interest to contract back in taking into account their attitude to risk and their personal circumstances. The Department is however committed to ensuring that people are properly informed of the issues involved so that they can make a decision that best suits their needs. This includes the fact that when people reach the age at which the age-related rebate is capped, currently age 53, most of them would be better off contracting back in.

Post Office Card Account

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what limitation his Department places on the amount of pension or benefit that an individual can withdraw from a Post Office card account. [208992]

Mr. Pond: The Department places no limitation on the amount of pension or benefit that an individual can withdraw from a Post Office card account. However, the Post Office card account has a daily limit on withdrawals of £600 unless three days notice is given. This is explained to customers in the terms and conditions when they apply to open an account.

Press Officers

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many press officers are employed in the Department. [206521]

Maria Eagle: As at Friday 17 December 2004 were 15 National Press officers (Whole Time Equivalents), and 24 Regional Press Officers employed by the Department.

Stolen Property

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many civil servants from his Department have *(a)* faced disciplinary proceedings as a result of allegations of theft, *(b)* been charged with theft and *(c)* been dismissed following theft allegations in each year since 1997. [206412]

Maria Eagle: No information is held on Department of Work and Pensions staff who have been charged with theft.

The available information on staff who have faced disciplinary proceedings as a result of allegations of theft, and *(c)* been dismissed following theft allegations is in the following table:

	Number of staff who have faced disciplinary proceedings as a result of allegations of theft	*Number of staff who have been dismissed following theft allegations*
January 2003 to January 2004	3	2
January 2004 to September 2004	2	2

All DWP staff are subject to the Department's Standards of Behaviour statement which is based on the Civil Service Code. This is available and publicised on the DWP intranet site.

All forms of misconduct are dealt with under the Department's disciplinary policy and procedures. The Department's disciplinary policy includes, under gross misconduct:

bribery, theft or fraud at work, and

theft or attempted theft of official property or money.

If anyone in the Department is charged with or convicted of a criminal offence they are required to inform their manager straight away.

Any behaviour likely to discredit the individual or the business, for example the conviction for certain criminal offences is classed as serious or gross misconduct.

When an offence comes to light consideration is given to establish whether restriction of duties, transfer or suspension from duty is appropriate and what disciplinary action is required. Failure to report a criminal caution can of itself be treated as a disciplinary offence.

Telephone Numbers

Mr. Tyler: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much revenue his Department has received from the use of non-geographic 0870 telephone numbers for the period 1 October 2003 to 30 September. [205823]

Maria Eagle *[holding answer 20 December 2004]*: The Whistleblowers Hotline is a confidential service available to Department for Work and Pensions staff and is the only 0870 number in use.

The amount of revenue the Department for Work and Pensions has received for the use of non-geographic 0870 telephone numbers for the period 1 October 2003 to 30 September 2004 is £15.44 as a result of 59 calls.

This amount is offset against the amount that is paid for the provision of this line.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Child Support Agency

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the number of deduction from earnings orders issued by the Northern Ireland Child Support Agency in respect of new scheme cases in *(a)* 2003–04 and *(b)* the current year. [208571]

Mr. Spellar: There were 280 deduction from earnings orders in place in 2003–04, while in 2004–05 to date there are 642.

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the progress made by the Northern Ireland Child Support Agency towards its milestone target of securing a 50 per cent. increase in the number of children receiving child maintenance by March. [208575]

Mr. Spellar: The most recent figures available at 30 November 2004 showed a 32.4 per cent. increase in the number of children receiving child maintenance.

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much money has been categorised by the Northern Ireland Child Support Agency as probably uncollectable in *(a)* each financial year from 2000–01 to date and *(b)* in total over that period. [208576]

Mr. Spellar: The amount of money that has been categorised by the Northern Ireland Child Support Agency as probably uncollectable in each financial year from 2000–01 to 2003–04, and in total over that period is as follows:

	Amount of money categorised as probably uncollectible (£)
2000–01	3,792,000
2001–02	2,083,000
2002–03	3,262,000
2003–04	1,177,000
Total	10,315,000

Further Education Colleges

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will publish the report of the study carried out by BDO Stoy Hayward on the restructuring of further education colleges in Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement. [208431]

Mr. Gardiner: The Department for Employment and Learning published its proposals for the future of Further Education in Northern Ireland in March 2004. Consultation on those proposals was completed in June 2004. In taking forward the proposals, and having regard to the responses received during the period of consultation, the Department has commissioned further work on those aspects of the proposals that relate to the future size and structure of the FE sector. The outcome of this further work will be presented to a steering group comprised of representatives of Further Education colleges, as well as officials from the Department itself. It is not intended to publish the outcome of this work; however any conclusions drawn from it will inform an implementation plan that will be published later in the year.

Government Expenditure

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the total Government expenditure in the Province was in each of the last 20 years. [206617]

Mr. Pearson: Details of Government Expenditure in Northern Ireland can be found in the "Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses" (PESA) document, published by HM Treasury on an annual basis. Copies are available in the Library.

Health Services

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he is taking to ensure homeless people have equitable access to health services in the Province. [206342]

Angela Smith: While health services in the Province are available to everybody, homeless people often have difficulties in accessing services. In recognition of this, a number of Health and Social Services Trusts, with various partners, have established outreach projects to target need in those areas with a high prevalence of homelessness.

The Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety is represented on an interdepartmental and cross-sector Promoting Social Inclusion (PSI) Working Group on Homelessness. Access to health services for the homeless was looked at under the remit of this group and a number of Proposals were included in the resulting report. The report is currently the subject of a consultation exercise, and will be published thereafter.

Housing Executive

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what percentage of offers made by the Housing Executive under the House Sales Scheme were issued within 10 weeks of application during 2003–04. [208603]

Mr. Spellar: During the 2003–04 financial year 68 per cent. of offers (3,518) were issued within 10 weeks of the application being made. In total 5,209 offers were made in that year.

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much was owed in rent arrears to the Housing Executive on 31 March 2004. [208604]

Mr. Spellar: At year ended 31 March 2004 collectable rental income[1] was £265.5 million and gross arrears[2] were £19.1 million.

[1] Collectable Rent includes rents of dwellings and garages and district heating charges.

[2] Gross arrears include overpayment of housing benefit arising from tenants failing to correctly advise of their financial circumstances and is a rolling figure which includes unrecovered arrears from previous years.

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many grants the Housing Executive approved in 2003–04 for the repairs of homes in the private sector; what the total value was of those grants; and what the target is for such grants in 2004–05. [208609]

Mr. Spellar: During the 2003–04 financial year the Housing Executive approved 9,600 grants at a total value of just under £42.6 million. The target for the 2004–05 financial year is 5,945 with an estimated total value of just under £40.5 million.

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on how many homes the Housing Executive started planned maintenance work in 2003–04; and what its target is for such starts in 2004–05. [208610]

Mr. Spellar: The Housing Executive's planned maintenance work covers a variety of programmes and the number of homes addressed in 2003–04 and target for 2004- 05 in each category is as follows:

	2003–04		*Target for 2004–05*	
	Schemes	*Properties*	*Schemes*	*Properties*
External cyclic maintenance	82	16,207	44	8,000
Heating replacement	34	3,845	48	4,120
Bathroom/kitchen replacement	20	1,170	29	1,500
Smoke alarm installation	9	3,319	6	4,100
Total	145	24,541	127	17,720

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many improvement schemes the Housing Executive began in 2003–04; and what its target is for such starts in 2004–05. [208611]

Mr. Spellar: The Housing Executive's improvement schemes cover a variety of programmes and the number of homes addressed in 2003–04 and target for 2004–05 in each category is as follows:

	2003–04		*2004–05*	
	Schemes	*Homes*	*Schemes*	*Homes*
Health and safety	2	382	2	164
Multi element improvement	45	1,584	35	1,450
Single element improvement	17	573	—	—
Special schemes	7	46	4	120
Total	71	2,585	41	1,734

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much was spent in the *(a)* Coleraine and *(b)* Limavady borough council areas on structural maintenance by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive in 2004. [208700]

Mr. Spellar: In the 2004 calendar year the amount spent on structural maintenance to Northern Ireland Housing Executive properties in the Coleraine and Limavady borough council areas was as follows:

£

	External cyclic maintenance schemes	*Multi element improvement schemes*
Coleraine district	1,059,396	1,805,595
Limavady district	577,492	1,137,693

Odyssey Complex (Belfast)

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the arrangements are for policing the area around the Odyssey complex in Belfast; whether different arrangements are made at weekends; what plans he has to make more resources available for policing in this area; and if he will make a statement. [202887]

Mr. Pearson: The Odyssey Complex has developed into a major entertainment and event centre, attracting over four million people annually throughout Northern Ireland including visitors from abroad. The PSNI have a statutory duty to police the area and ensure public safety, including the many families and young people who frequent the complex and surrounding area. In order to achieve this, East Belfast PSNI works in partnership with the management and security staff at the Odyssey, the Laganside Corporation, Belfast City Council and Translink.

In order to combat public disorder, assaults and crime, East Belfast District PSNI implements Operation Safenight every Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights between the hours of 7pm and 3am. Operation Safenight is focused not only on the Odyssey complex but also the Short Strand community interface and surrounding Laganside area. This operation is resourced with 1 Sergeant and 4 Constables for East Belfast DCU supported by 2–3 Regional Tactical Support Group (TSG) vehicles when available. If TSG resources are unavailable, then other East Belfast anti-crime patrols would deploy in support of the Operation Safenight personnel, where necessary.

During the rest of the week the Odyssey area would be policed in the same manner as the rest of the East Belfast District.

The PSNI continue to review the deployment of police resources commensurate with other policing priorities in the East Belfast area.

Policing

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the recent Police Service of Northern Ireland review of the retirement age of part-time reserve officers. [208289]

Mr. Pearson: I have been informed by the Police Service of Northern Ireland that it has not conducted a review of the age retirement of part-time reserve officers. In accordance with the Police Service of Northern

Ireland Reserve (Part-Time) Regulations 2004, part-time reserve members appointed after 8 February 2004 (the date on which the regulations came into force) shall be retired at age 65. These regulations also contain transitional arrangements for existing part-time reserve members.

These transitional arrangements will allow existing PTR members to move to the new PTR arrangements, subject to receiving appropriate training. I have been informed that the PSNI has written to existing PTR officers who would be or have been subject to possible retirement at age 62 to advise them accordingly.

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average number of hours worked by part-time reserve police officers was during 2004, broken down by district command unit area. [208290]

Mr. Pearson: The information requested is set out in the following table which has been provided by the PSNI.

Average number of hours worked by part-time police officers between 1 December 2003 and 30 November 2004

DCU	*Total hours*	*Number of part-time reserve officers*	*Yearly average*	*Monthly average*
Belfast South	13,521.25	55	245.84	20.49
Lisburn	20,370.75	58	351.22	29.27
Belfast North	15,080.50	67	225.08	18.76
Antrim	4,844.75	18	269.15	22.43
Carrickfergus	7,918.25	30	263.94	22.00
Newtownabbey	13,957.00	51	273.67	22.81
Belfast East	14,874.00	66	225.36	18.78
Castlereagh	6,058.25	42	144.24	12.02
North Down	10,237.50	40	255.94	21.33
Ards	17,831.50	69	258.43	21.54
Down	8,362.75	22	380.13	31.68
Armagh	4,804.50	16	300.28	25.02
Banbridge	9,158.00	29	315.79	26.32
Newry and Mourne	747.00	3	249.00	20.75
Craigavon	8,145.25	29	280.87	23.41
Cookstown	730.25	4	182.56	15.21
Dungannon and South Tyrone	2,736.50	10	273.65	22.80
Fermanagh	7,907.50	24	329.48	27.46
Omagh	5,529.75	20	276.49	23.04
Foyle	1,418.25	8	177.28	14.77
Strabane	4,368.00	16	273.00	22.75
Coleraine	15,040.75	37	406.51	33.88
Limavady	1,183.00	5	236.60	19.72
Magherafelt	814.00	4	203.50	16.96
Ballymena	10,083.50	34	296.57	24.71
Ballymoney and Moyle	2,087.75	8	260.97	21.75
Larne	5,679.75	19	298.93	24.91

Roads

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much was spent in the *(a)* Coleraine and *(b)* Limavady borough council areas on minor roads improvements by the roads service in 2004. [208701]

Mr. Spellar: The chief executive of roads service (Dr. Malcolm McKibbin) has been asked to write to the hon. Member in response to this question.

Letter from Dr. Malcolm McKibbin to Mr. Gregory Campbell, dated 17 January 2005:

You recently asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland a Parliamentary Question about expenditure on minor road improvements in the Coleraine and Limavady Borough Council area in 2004. I have been asked to reply as this issue falls within my responsibility as Chief Executive of Roads Service.

The table below shows the expenditure incurred by Roads Service on minor road improvement schemes in these Council areas during 2004.

Spend on Minor Road Works

Period	*Council area*	*Spend[1] (£)*
1 January 2004 to 31 December 2004	Coleraine borough	900,000
1 January 2004 to 31 December 2004	Limavady borough	300,000

[1] Figures provided have been rounded to the nearest £100,000

Please note that these figures include spend on minor road works, collision remedial schemes, traffic calming, transportation measures and minor bridge strengthening.

For your additional information, I would advise that the resources available for minor capital schemes are allocated to roads service's four divisions which, in turn, apportion this across district council areas on a needs-based priority approach using indicators such as population, weighted road lengths and the number of accidents. This ensures, so far as possible, an equitable distribution of funds across the country.

I hope this information is helpful.

Social Security Agency

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many days on average were taken by the Social Security Agency in *(a)* 2003–04 and *(b)* the current financial year to date to process a new claim for pension credit; and if he will make a statement. [208585]

Mr. Spellar: In 2003–04 the average time taken to clear a pension credit application was 53 days. In the current financial year to December 2004 the average time taken to clear an application has been 25.9 days.

Performance against the average clearance time (target is 12 days) has been hindered because of a backlog of claims. A recovery plan has been in place since September 2004 and the backlog should be cleared within the next two months. Claims received since September 2004 are now being processed within the 12 day target.

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many applications for pension credit are outstanding with the Social Security Agency; what is the date of the earliest outstanding application; and if he will make a statement. [208586]

Mr. Spellar: From a backlog of over 6,500 in August 2004 there are currently 621 pension credit applications outstanding. The majority of these require further information to be provided to enable the claim to be fully assessed. The earliest outstanding application is September 2003.

Apart from those cases in the backlog, there are a further 1,100 pension credit current applications dating from November 2004 at various stages in the assessment process. These cases are also awaiting further information before the claims can be finalised.

In overall terms the numbers of cases still to be assessed has reduced substantially over the past five months and as the backlog cases are cleared over the next month or two, resources will be redeployed to keep the current clearance times in line with the 12 day target.

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate he has made of the *(a)* number and *(b)* percentage of pensioners eligible for pension credit in Northern Ireland who have applied for pension credit. [208605]

Mr. Spellar: No estimate has been made of numbers of pensioners who might be entitled to state pension credit. However, since the introduction of state pension credit in October 2003, 22,500 pension credit applications have been received in the Social Security Agency. 15,000 cases have been successful.

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people in Northern Ireland who receive *(a)* the state retirement pension, *(b)* state pension credit and *(c)* disability living allowance in cash at post offices (i) have said that they wish their payments made into a bank or post office account after 1 April, (ii) have said that they do not wish payments made into an account and (iii) have not responded to the Social Security Agency's inquiries. [208588]

Mr. Spellar: As a result of a major exercise to move customers to direct payment, the latest available figures show that, at 1 December 2004, 81 per cent. of retirement pension and 76 per cent. of pension credit customers (equating to 192,000 and 68,000 customers respectively) now have their payments made into a bank, building society or Post Office card account.

During the conversion exercise 6,000 pension customers indicated that they did not wish to convert to direct payment, while 20,000 failed to respond to our inquiries.

As at 1 December 2004, 74 per cent. of disability living allowance customers (equating to 121,000 customers) now have their payments made into a bank, building society or Post Office card account.

During the conversion exercise 4,000 DLA customers indicated that they did not wish to convert to Direct Payment, while 21,000 failed to respond to our inquiries.

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what proportion of Social Security Agency customers have their benefits paid directly into bank or Post Office accounts. [208589]

Mr. Spellar: The latest available figures show that, at 1 December 2004, 78 per cent. of Social Security Agency customers were being paid by direct payment. This comprised of 51 per cent. being paid via a bank or building society account and 27 per cent. via a Post Office card account.

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many exception reports have been submitted in the current financial year to the Chief Executive of the Social Security Agency to indicate areas of the agency's business where an assurance that proper controls exist cannot be given; which areas of the agency's businesses are now subject to exception reports; and if he will make a statement. [208606]

Mr. Spellar: Under the Social Security Agency's Certificate of Assurance reporting process there have been seven exception reports in the current financial year covering 35 areas where there has been slippage against performance targets or operational concerns. The majority of exception reports received have been in relation to delays in completion of internal performance management processes and these will be remedied before the year end. One exception report was received indicating slippage against the Public Service Agreement target in relation to overpayment recovery. All exception reports indicate the recovery action to be taken and revised targets where appropriate.

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the levels of *(a)* fraud and *(b)* incorrectness were in each social security benefit for which the Social Security Agency is responsible, and in total in each financial year from 2000–01 to date; in (i) monetary terms and (ii) as a percentage of the total expenditure on each benefit programme in each year. [208607]

Mr. Spellar: The Government are totally committed to a robust approach to tackling fraud and error and abuse of the social security system wherever it occurs.

The Social Security Agency has a comprehensive and rigorous strategy for combating fraud designed to ensure that:

claims entering the system are legitimate;

once in the system claims are maintained properly; and

where fraud does enter the system it is detected and appropriate action is taken.

In the three-year period from April 2001 to March 2004, 40,000 cases of suspected fraud were investigated. Of these cases, over 16,000 resulted in withdrawal of claims or changes in the rate of benefit paid totalling £9.8 million.

The agency does not measure levels of fraud and error in every benefit, instead we focus on those benefits where the risk is greater.

The requested figures for the main benefits are detailed in the following tables.

Fraud	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
Income support				
Percentage	2.0	2.0	0.9	1.9
£	12,037,268	13,377,786	5,867,594	9,260,275
Jobseeker's allowance				
Percentage	5.1	6.6	7.6	6.4
£	6,714,226	7,602,967	7,805,050	6,355,232
Disability living allowance[1]				
Percentage	—	0.3	—	N/A
£	—	1,350,288	—	—
Incapacity benefit[1]				
Percentage	1.0	—	0.3	—
£	3,089,000	—	1,067,712	—
Carers allowance[2]				
Percentage	—	—	—	4.5
£	—	—	—	3,780,000
Attendance allowance				
Minimal	Minimal	Minimal	Minimal	
Retirement pension				
Minimal	Minimal	Minimal	Minimal	

Overall incorrectness (including fraud)	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
Income support				
Percentage	4.8	4.4	4.4	5.1
£	29,107,796	29,329,733	30,290,747	25,129,827
Jobseeker's allowance				
Percentage	6.2	7.3	9.0	8.0
£	8,092,298	8,299,679	9,21[illegible],085	7,967,774
Disability living allowance[1]				
Percentage	—	9.3	—	N/A
£	—	41,734,065	—	—
Incapacity benefit1				
Percentage	2.9	—	2.2	—
£	9,100,791	—	7,131,418	—
Carers allowance2				
Percentage	—	—	—	6.7
£	—	—	—	5,630,000
Attendance allowance				
Percentage	—	—	4.9	2.0
£	—	—	8,700,000	3,600,000
Retirement pension				
Percentage	—	—	4.0	0.9
£	—	—	42,500,000	10,500,000

[1] Disability living allowance and incapacity benefit levels are measured every two years.

[2] nly one Benefit Review has been carried out on carers allowance.

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will place in the Library copies of the monthly reports to the Social Security Agency management board on the agency's performance in meeting its programme protection plans for 2004–05. [208608]

Mr. Spellar: Information on the Social Security Agency's performance against its programme protection plans is presented to the agency's management board on a quarterly basis. I will arrange for copies of the quarterly reports for 2004–05 and for future reports to be placed in the Library.

Tourism and Leisure Industry

David Burnside: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he is taking to address the skills shortages in the Greater Belfast area for graduates in the hospitality, tourism and leisure industry. [202306]

Mr. Gardiner: The Tourism Training Trust (TTT) is funded by the Department to provide a wide range of initiatives for those wishing to enter the local hospitality and tourism industry including graduate entry. The TTT works closely with the People 1st Sector Skills Council and its immediate priority is to agree with the industry action to address skills shortages and raise skill levels. The Trust has not reported any specific shortages in respect of graduates entering the sector.

The School of Hotel, Leisure and Tourism at the University of Ulster offers a full range of vocational courses in the areas of Hospitality & Tourism Management, Culinary Arts, Consumer Studies and Leisure Events and Cultural Management. The university has a medium term target of up to 700 relevant full time undergraduate student places. In addition, Belfast Institute of Further and Higher Education provides a Foundation Degree in Hospitality and Tourism Management validated by the University of Ulster.

David Burnside: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the first year student intake was to *(a)* the catering college and *(b)* the University of Ulster's Department of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure at Londonderry and Jordanstown (i) in 2001 and (ii) since the merger transferring all student intake to Portrush; and what the intake was in (A) 2002, (B) 2003 and (C) 2004, broken down by (1) type of degree and (2) courses of study. [202307]

Mr. Gardiner: The first year student intake on HE courses to the NI Hotel and Catering College (NIHCC) in 2001–02 by level of course and subject area of study was as follows:

First year enrolments on higher education courses at NIHCC: 2001–02

Course subject area	*HNC*	*HND*	*NVQ (equivalent) 4 and 5*	*Total*
Administration and Office Skills	0	10	0	10
Hospitality	6	26	40	72
Leisure Tourism and Recreation	0	31	31	62
Total	—	—	—	144

Source:
FESR

The first year student intake on hospitality, tourism and leisure courses at the University of Ulster in 2001–02 by campus, type of degree and course subject area was as follows:

First year enrolments on hospitality, tourism and leisure courses at the University of Ulster: 2001–02

Campus	*Course subject area*	*First Degree*	*Postgraduate*	*Total*
Coleraine		0	0	0
Jordanstown	Catering and Institutional Management	75	2	77
Magee	Catering and Institutional Management	24	6	30
Total		—	—	107

Source:
HESA

Following the merger of the NIHCC with the University of Ulster, the first year student intake on hospitality, tourism and leisure courses at the University of Ulster in 2002–03 by campus, type of degree and course subject area was as follows.

First year enrolments on hospitality, tourism and leisure courses at the University of Ulster: 2002–03

	Course subject area	*Foundation degrees*	*First degree*	*Total*
Coleraine	Management studies	19	55	74
	Tourism, Transport and Travel	27	45	72
Jordanstown	Management studies	0	21	21
	Tourism, Transport and Travel	0	6	6
Magee	Management studies	0	1	1
	Tourism, Transport and Travel	0	7	7
Total		46	135	181

Source:
HESA

Information on the first year student intake on hospitality, tourism and catering courses at the University of Ulster in 2003–04 will not be published by the Department until February 2005 and the 2004–05 student intake will not be published until February 2006.

Tourism Training Trust

David Burnside: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much funding was made available in the current financial year to the Tourism Training Trust; what its budget for the year is; and what estimate he has made of *(a)* funding and *(b)* the budget in future years. [202305]

Mr. Gardiner: The funding made available to the Tourism Training Trust (TTT) in the year to date is £100,692. Its budget for 2004–05 is £195,584. The future funding and budget of TTT are not yet decided and will be based on the business plan to be submitted by TTT for agreement by the Department.

Water and Sewerage Charges

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what analysis he has made of the costs and benefits of extending water metering to *(a)* hospitals, *(b)* schools and *(c)* Government offices in Northern Ireland. [208602]

Mr. Spellar: It has always been the policy to meter water supplies to properties that are not used exclusively for domestic purposes and this will continue to be the preferred basis for charging this customer group. Hospitals, schools and Government offices are currently metered and these account for around 2,700 of the 74,000 non-domestic meters.

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the projected cost is of bringing all Water Service mains and treatment plants up to EC Water Directive standards. [208373]

Mr. Spellar: The Chief Executive of Water Service (Mrs. Katharine Bryan) has been asked to write to the hon. Member in response to this question.

Letter from Mrs. Katharine Bryan to Mr. Eddie McGrady, dated 17 January 2005:

You recently asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland a Parliamentary Question (No. 208373) about the projected costs of bringing all Water Service mains and treatment plants up to EC Water Directive standards. I have been asked to reply as this issue falls within my responsibility as Chief Executive of Water Service.

Investment levels in upgrading the water and sewerage infrastructure in Northern Ireland have lagged behind those in the rest of the UK for many years. As a result, compliance with EC Directives has been significantly lower in Northern Ireland particularly on wastewater treatment. It is estimated that substantial capital investment, projected at £2.9 billion over the next 20 years, needs to be invested to modernise the existing infrastructure. Over one-quarter of this total is directly attributable to meeting the quality standards required by EC Directives. The remaining investment is required to cater for growth in the demand for water and sewerage services, to improve levels of customer service and to renew the existing watermains, sewers and other parts of the infrastructure. All of this investment must of course comply with the relevant standards including quality.

Priority is at present being given to upgrading water and wastewater treatment works. This accounts for some £1 billion of the total investment required and of this approximately one-third is for water treatment while two-thirds is for wastewater treatment. Refurbishment of watermains and sewer networks accounts for the remaining £1.9 billion and will take longer to complete. It is planned to accelerate spending on network refurbishment to around £100 million per year within the next few years, as the treatment works upgrading programme nears completion.

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the Water Service's future work plan is for fixing burst water mains in Northern Ireland. [208374]

Mr. Spellar: The Chief Executive of Water Service (Mrs. Katharine Bryan) has been asked to write to the hon. Member in response to this question.

Letter from Mrs. Katharine Bryan to Mr. Eddie McGrady, dated 14 January 2004:

You recently asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland a Parliamentary Question (No. 208374) about Water Service's future work plan with regard to fixing all burst water mains in Northern Ireland. I have been asked to reply as the issue falls to my responsibility as Chief Executive of Water Service.

Water Service aims to provide continuous supplies of safe drinking water to all customers connected to the water distribution system and to ensure that interruptions to supply, whether due to an emergency or planned maintenance work, are dealt with efficiently and without unnecessary delay. Water Service's Customer Charter sets out the standards it aims to achieve in the delivery of these services. These standards include:

having inspection staff on site within four hours (six hours outside normal working hours) when an unexpected problem disrupts the water supply;

restoring water supplies cut off in an emergency within 12 hours;

restoring water supplies cut off for planned work by the time stated in the notice, which will normally be within 12 hours;

making alternative water supplies available if any interruption is expected to last more than 24 hours.

Water Service also has a well developed Major Incident Plan to manage major incidents and to mitigate the effect on customer supplies.

Customers can report interruptions in supply or leaks in the distribution system to the Water Service Customer Service Unit by telephoning the Waterline (08457 440088) or the Leakline (08000 282011) during normal working hours. An out-of-hours emergency service is also available by contacting the Waterline. In addition, Water Service has Telemetry Units, which are staffed 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, to monitor the working of the water and sewerage systems. Operational repair teams, consisting of around 300 staff from both Water Service and contractors, can be deployed to respond to operational incidents throughout the day and night. During 2004, Water Service repaired over 6,000 bursts and leaks on the water distribution system and it is anticipated that a similar number will be repaired in 2005.

Effective leakage management is a key component in the delivery of Water Service's second Water Efficiency Plan, which was published last year. Water Service is currently implementing a comprehensive leakage reduction programme, costing over £20 million in the three-year period, to reduce leakage to the economic level of 172 million litres per day by 2007.

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether the Water Service reduces water pressure in an effort to reduce water wasted through burst water mains. [208375]

Mr. Spellar: The Chief Executive of Water Service (Mrs. Katharine Bryan) has been asked to write to the hon. Member in response to this question.

Letter from Mrs. Katharine Bryan to Mr. Eddie McGrady, dated 14 January 2004:

You recently asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland a Parliamentary Question (No. 208375) about the management of water pressure to reduce the amount of water wasted through bursts in water mains. I have been asked to reply as this issue falls to my responsibility as Chief Executive of Water Service.

Water Service's second Water Efficiency Plan, which was published on 12 January 2004, set out a wide range of measures aimed at reducing demand for water, including effective leakage management and the raising of awareness of water efficiency measures. A significant programme of leakage reduction is a major component of the Plan and Water Service is currently implementing a comprehensive Leakage Reduction Action Plan aimed at reducing leakage to the economic level by 2007. It is widely recognised throughout the water industry that excessive water pressure within the distribution system contributes to leaks, and the design and implementation of an effective pressure management scheme is, therefore, one of the main elements of the Action Plan.

Water Service is committed to extending pressure management to 30 new areas each year. In the current year this total has already been bettered and pressure management has been extended to over 50 new areas. Pressure management schemes have targeted areas where pressure, particularly at night, is excessive. The schemes are carefully designed to ensure that an adequate level of pressure is maintained to customers at all times.

The implementation of the Leakage Reduction Action Plan has enabled Water Service to reduce leakage from 291 million litres to 231 million litres in the period from April 2002 to March 2004. Water Service is on target to reduce leakage to 205 million litres per day by March 2005 and to achieve the economic level of leakage of 172 million litres per day by 2007.

HEALTH

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what dietary supplements are recommended for children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. [207489]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 10 January 2005]:* The National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) issued guidance on the treatment of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) with Methylphenidate in October 2000. It made no recommendations about dietary supplementation. However, it did note that "Dietary interventions are seen as possibly useful in cases where a parent has observed that a particular food aggravates hyperactivity".

This guidance is currently under review by NICE and the development of a guideline that will address the effectiveness of a broader range of interventions has also been agreed by NICE. The scope of this guideline has yet to be determined.

Autism

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research his Department has undertaken into the benefits of early intervention for children with autism; and if he will make a statement. [206973]

Dr. Ladyman: The main agency through which the Government support medical and clinical research is the Medical Research Council (MRC). The MRC is an independent body funded by the Department of Trade and Industry via the Office of Science and Technology.

The MRC is currently not funding any intervention studies in autism. The subject has however been identified as a priority by the council, and workshops held in order to encourage applications for grant support from researchers in the area have generated a number of applications which are presently under consideration.

Barnet and Chase Farm NHS Trust

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients at Barnet and Chase Farm NHS trust are waiting for *(a)* ophthalmology and *(b)* cardiothoracic elective surgery; what the average waiting time is in each case; and if he will make a statement. [207942]

Dr. Ladyman: Barnet and Chase Farm national health service trust does not provide services in either of the specialties mentioned.

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients from Barnet and Chase Farm NHS trust had treatment outside London in *(a)* 2003–04 and *(b)* 2004–05 to date; and if he will make a statement. [207943]

Dr. Ladyman: Information is collected on the number of patients treated outside of their primary care trust (PCT) of residence. Information on the number of patients from Barnet PCT who received national health service treatment outside London is shown in the following table.

PCT of residence: 5A9 Barnet PCT—count of finished admission episodes[1] in strategic health authorities outside London—NHS hospitals, England 2001–02, 2002–03, 2003–2004

	Finished admission episodes
2001–02	1,325
2002–03	1,210
2003–04	1,293

[1] Finished admission episodes—A finished admission episode is the first period of in-patient care under one consultant within one healthcare provider. Please note that admissions do not represent the number of in-patients, as a person may have more than one admission within the year.

Source:

Hospital Episode Statistics, Department of Health.

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients at *(a)* Barnet and Chase Farm NHS Trust, *(b)* the Royal Free Hospital and *(c)* Northwick Park Hospital had operations cancelled at the last minute in each of the last three years. [207944]

Dr. Ladyman: Please note that data is available only at trust level rather than hospital level. Therefore, the figures for Northwick Park Hospital are included in the figures for North West London.

The number of patients who have had last minute cancellations for a non clinical reason are shown in the table.

Number of last minute cancellations for non-clinical reasons

Trust	*2003–04*	*2002–03*	*2001–02*
Barnet and Chase Farm Hospitals NHS Trust	40[illegible]	1,346	1,206
Royal Free Hampstead NHS Trust	2[illegible]	341	148
North West London Hospitals NHS Trust	4[illegible]3	617	499

The data source is the Department's dataset quarterly monitoring of cancelled operations. I have not provided any data for 2004–05 as only part year data are available.

Care Standards

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will ensure that persons applying for approval under the Health and Social Care (Community Health and Standards) Act 2003 to different offices of the Care Standards Commission are only required to pay for one Criminal Records Bureau check when making multiple applications under the Care Standards Act 2000. [206638]

Dr. Ladyman: The requirement for charging for a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check is set out in the Police Act 1997. There is no provision in the legislation for allowing an application to be made without payment of a fee. However, volunteer care workers do not have to pay for a CRB check.

Consultants

Dr. Richard Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS consultant physician posts are unfilled; and what proportion of the consultant physician work force this represents. [209242]

Mr. Hutton: The latest vacancy data available is at 31 March 2004.

The table shows the three-month consultant physician vacancy rates and numbers.

Three-month consultant physicians vacancy rate[1] and numbers in England as at 31 March 2004

	2004			
Specialty	*3 month vacancy rate (percentage)*	*3 month vacancy number*	*Staff in post vacancy (whole-time number equivalent)*	*Staff in post (headcount)*
Audiological medicine	0.0	0	34	39
Cardiology	4.2	28	635	692
Clinical genetics	2.1	2	94	124
Clinical neurophysiology	4.9	4	78	86
Clinical pharmacology and therapeutics	0.0	0	50	74
Dermatology	4.7	18	373	427
Endocrinology and diabetes mellitus	3.3	16	469	538
Gastroenterology	0.6	3	597	662
Genito-urinary medicine	3.3	10	286	312
Geriatric medicine	2.8	25	876	928
Infectious diseases	0.0	0	70	102
Medical oncology	3.5	6	164	197
Neurology	3.4	13	371	427
Nuclear medicine	9.3	5	44	53
Occupational health	8.6	6	64	84
Paediatric cardiology	1.6	1	62	68
Palliative medicine	9.2	15	149	195
Rehabilitation medicine	2.3	3	107	115
Renal medicine	1.7	5	294	326
Respiratory medicine	2.7	15	542	583
Rheumatology	2.8	12	415	474
Other[2]	18.8	43	184	239

[1] Three month vacancies are vacancies which trusts are actively trying to fill, which had lasted for three months or more (whole-time equivalents). Three month vacancy rates are three month vacancies expressed as a percentage of three month vacancies plus staff in post.

[2] No matching speciality can be found for pharmaceutical medicine or general medicine. These specialities and other specialities for which we do not have a match are reported under the Other category in the vacancy survey.

Source:

Department of Health medical and dental vacancy survey

Consultants' Contract (Derbyshire)

Mr. McLoughlin: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate he has made of the cost to NHS trusts in *(a)* West Derbyshire constituency and *(b)* Derbyshire of implementing the new consultants' contract. [207444]

Dr. Ladyman: No estimates have been made of the costs of the consultant contract by constituency or county. Funding for the consultant contract, agreed with the British Medical Association during negotiations was allocated to primary care trusts (PCTs) in December 2002 as part of main allocations. The amount that went to main allocations was 0.3 per cent. (£129 million) in 2003–04, 0.4 per cent. (£178 million) in 2004–05 and 0.5 per cent. (£224 million) in 2005–06.

Digital Hearing Aids

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people in *(a)* North Southwark and Bermondsey, *(b)* Camberwell and Peckham and *(c)* Dulwich and West Norwood are on waiting lists for digital hearing aids; and if he will make a statement. [207900]

Dr. Ladyman: This information is not held centrally.

Doctors

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what methods his Department uses to monitor the performance of doctors. [204840]

Mr. Hutton: Doctors' performance is a matter for their employer to regulate under contract of service.

We have introduced systems of clinical governance, clinical audit and appraisal into the national health service all of which are designed to enable NHS trusts and primary care trusts to scrutinise evidence of an individual doctor's practice.

Free Nursing Care

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what he estimates the average cost per resident will be of free nursing care for older people from 1 April. [208131]

Dr. Ladyman: The total budget for national health service funded nursing care for 2005–06 is £584 million, which amounts to an estimated average of £87 per person, per week.

GPs (Southwark, North and Bermondsey)

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients there were for each general practitioner in Southwark, North and Bermondsey on the most recent recorded date; and if he will make a statement. [207901]

Dr. Ladyman: The information requested is shown in the table.

Average list size of unrestricted principals and equivalents (UPEs)[1] by PCT in London as at 30 September 2003

Number (headcount)

		UPEs	*Patients of UPEs*	*Average list size*
England		28,568	52,713,780	1,845
London		4,134	8,357,783	2,022
of which:				
Q07	South East London	880	1,706,031	1,939
TAK	Bexley Care Trust	110	220,748	2,007
5A7	Bromley PCT	167	316,819	1,897
5A8	Greenwich PCT	108	253,156	2,344
5LD	Lambeth PCT	189	353,962	1,873
5LF	Lewisham PCT	149	279,822	1,878
5LE	Southwark PCT	157	281,524	1,793

[1] UPEs include general medical service (GMS) unrestricted principals, personal medical service (PMS) contracted general practitioners and PMS salaried GPs.

Note:

Patient data has been revised from previously published figures

Source:

Department of Health QMS and PMS statistics.

Health Services (Hendon)

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many general practitioners were practising in Hendon at 31 December *(a)* 2004 and *(b)* 1997; and if he will make a statement. [207948]

Dr. Ladyman: The information on general practitioner numbers held by primary care trust (PCT) is shown in the table.

All practitioners (excluding retainers, registrars and locums)[1] for North Central London Strategic Health Authority (SHA) and Barnet PCT

numbers (headcount)

		1997	*2001*	*December 2003*	*June 2004*
Q05	North Central London SHA	744	751	800	806
5A9	Barnet PCT	[2]—	202	211	230

[1] All practitioners (excluding registrars, retainers and locums) include general medical service (QMS) unrestricted principals, personal medical service (PMS) contracted GPs, PMS salaried GPs, restricted principals, assistants, salaried doctors (Para 52 SFA), PMS others, flexible career scheme GPs and GP returners.

[2] Not applicable.

Note:

Data as at 30 September 2001–03, 31 December 2003 and 30 June 2004.

Source:

Department of Health GMS and PMS statistics.

Hospital Improvements

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has to modernise and improve buildings and services at *(a)* Northwick Park Hospital and *(b)* the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital, Stanmore. [207945]

Dr. Ladyman: My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State approved the strategic outline case (SOC) for the redevelopment of Northwick Park Hospital and St. Mark's Hospital in North Brent on 27 July 2004, as a Private Finance Initiative (PFI) development. The capital value of the scheme is £300 million. The scheme is expected to go out to the Official Journal of the European Union and tender for bidders in early 2006.

The Secretary of State approved the SOC for the redevelopment of the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital on 27 July 2004, as a PFI development. The capital value of the scheme is £121 million. The scheme is expected to go out to Official Journal of the EU and tender for bidders in mid-2005.

Intermediate Care Services

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans his Department has to extend the provision of intermediate care services; and if he will make a statement. [208130]

Dr. Ladyman: The NHS Plan announced a significant investment in a major programme to promote independence for older people by developing a wide range of services delivered in partnership with the national health service, social services, the independent sector and the voluntary sector. The programme has resulted in considerable growth in service provision over the 1999–2000 baseline, including:

> by September 2004 the number of intermediate care beds had more than doubled and the number of intermediate care places in non-residential settings had trebled,
>
> the number of people receiving intermediate care services increased by 77 per cent. between 1 April 2003 and 31 December 2003.

Parliamentary Questions

Sir Paul Beresford: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he will reply to the questions tabled by the hon. Member for Mole Valley on 21 December 2004, ref. *(a)* 206687, *(b)* 206688 and *(c)* 206887. [208366]

Ms Rosie Winterton: I replied to the hon. Member on Thursday 13 January.

Pesticide/Cancer Link

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on links between exposure to pesticides and the incidence of prostate cancer, with particular reference to the work of the Advisory Committee on Carcinogenicity. [208370]

Miss Melanie Johnson; I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to my hon. Friend the Member for Blaenau Gwent (Llew Smith) on 12 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 531W.

Prescription Charges

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will assess the impact of the fairer charging guidance on people with disabilities and older people whose income is just above the guaranteed minimum income level of income support plus 25 per cent. [208241]

Dr. Ladyman: We plan in due course to assess the impact of guidance on 'Fairer charging policies for home care'.

Smallpox Vaccine

Patrick Mercer: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 11 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 872W, when the Government expects to have enough undiluted doses of smallpox vaccine to cover the entire population. [205881]

Mr. Hutton: We currently have sufficient vaccine to mount a mass vaccination campaign for the United Kingdom population if required to do so. This would involve use of current stocks of both old and new vaccines, which are unlicensed. We have an on-going contract for the supply of licensed vaccine, which will provide sufficient undiluted doses of new vaccine for the entire UK population. Preparations for submission of a licence application for the vaccine are in progress and the vaccine will be supplied after completion of the necessary clinical trials and the granting of a licence.

Southwark Primary Care Trust

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what targeted funding hospitals in the Southwark Primary Care Trust area have received for the provision of acute stroke care; and if he will make a statement. [207895]

Dr. Ladyman: In line with our policy of shifting the balance of power, it is for local commissioners and providers to decide how services, including acute stoke care, are funded to meet local needs based upon their knowledge of local priorities.

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many nursing vacancies there are in the Southwark Primary Care Trust area; [207905]

(2) how many nurses are employed in each hospital in the Southwark Primary Care Trust area; and if he will make a statement. [207906]

Dr. Ladyman: The table shows the rate and number of nursing vacancies, and the number of nursing staff in post for England as a whole, South East London Strategic Health Authority (SHA) and Southwark Primary Care Trust (PCT).

NHS three month vacancies, for qualified nursing, midwifery and health visiting staff: three month vacancy rates, numbers and staff in post

	3 month vacancy rate percentage	3 month vacancy number	Staff in post (whole-time equivalent)	Staff in post (headcount)
	March 2004		September 2003	
England	2.6	7,508	291,925	364,692
of which:				
South East London SHA	7.3	811	11,024	13,930
of which:				
Southwark PCT	16.3	48	287	346

Notes:

1. Three month vacancy information is as at 31 March 2004.
2. Three month vacancies are vacancies which trusts are actively trying to fill, which had lasted for three months or more (whole time equivalents).
3. Three month vacancy rates are three month vacancies expressed as a percentage of three month vacancies plus staff in post.
4. Percentages are rounded to one decimal place.
5. Staff in post data is from the non-medical workforce census.

Sources:

Department of Health vacancies survey.

Department of Health non-medical workforce census.

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent assessment he has made of bed blocking in hospitals located in the Southwark Primary Care Trust area; and if he will make a statement. [207907]

Dr. Ladyman: Figures for the second quarter of 2003–04 show the total number of patients delayed in an acute hospital bed on any one day, within the Southwark Primary Care Trust area, is eight. This represents a reduction of 75 per cent., compared with the same time last year.

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many general practitioners there were in the Southwark Primary Care Trust area in *(a)* 2001–02, *(b)* 2002–03 and *(c)* 2003–04; and if he will make a statement. [207908]

Dr. Ladyman: The information requested is shown in the table.

All practitioners (excluding registrars, retainers and locums)[1] *for Southwark Primary Care Trust, 2001-June 2004*

5LE	*Numbers (headcount)*
Southwark PCT	
2001	145
2002	142
2003	159
June 2004	170

[1] All practitioners (excluding registrars, retainers and locums) include general medical service (GMS) unrestricted principals, personal medical service (PMS) contracted GPs, PMS salaried GPs, restricted principals, assistants, salaried doctors (Para 52 SFA), PMS others, flexible career scheme GPs and GP returners. Data as at 30 September 2001–03 and 30 June 2004.

Source:

Department of Health GMS and PMS statistics.

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients in the Southwark primary care trust area waited more than *(a)* three months, *(b)* six months, *(c)* nine months, *(d)* 12 months, *(e)* 15 months, *(f)* 18 months and *(g)* 24 months for (i) heart operations, (ii) cancer treatment and (iii) hip replacements in each year since 2000–01; and if he will make a statement. [207909]

Dr. Ladyman: The information requested is shown in the following tables.

Count of finished in-year admissions from waiting list and booked cases combined for heart operations. Heart operations defined as OPCS4 = K01-K71 in primary operative procedure field. PCT of Residence = 5LE (Southwark PCT) NHS hospitals England 2000–01 to 2003–04

	Finished in-year admissions			
Time waited	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
0 to three months	348	443	344	496
more than three to six months	129	103	93	116
more than six to nine months	46	29	19	24
more than nine to 12 months	26	15	7	12
more than 12 to 15 months	*	8	7	*
more than 15 to 18 months	10	*	*	—
more than 18 to 24 months	*	*	—	—
more than 24 months	*	—	*	—
Not known	11	17	73	29

Notes:

1. Due to reasons of confidentiality, figures between one and five have been suppressed and replaced with *.
2. A finished in-year admission is the first period of in-patient care under one consultant within one healthcare provider, excluding admissions beginning before 1 April at the start of the data year. Please note that admissions do not represent the number of in-patients, as a person may have more than one admission within the year.
3. The main operation is the first recorded operation in the hospital episode statistics (HES) data set and is usually the most resource intensive procedure performed during the episode. It is appropriate to use main operation when looking at admission details, e.g. time waited, but the figures for "all operations count of episodes" give a more complete count of episodes with an operation.
4. The primary diagnosis is the first of up to 14 (seven prior to 2002–03) diagnosis fields in the HES data set and provides the main reason why the patient was in hospital.
5. Figures have not been adjusted for shortfalls in data (i.e. the data are ungrossed).
6. Time waited statistics from HES are not the same as the published waiting list statistics. HES provides counts and time waited for all patients admitted to hospital within a given period whereas the published waiting list statistics count those waiting for treatment on a specific date and how long they have been on the waiting list. Also, HES calculates the time waited as the difference between the admission and decision to admit dates. Unlike published waiting list statistics, this is not adjusted for self-deferrals or periods of medical/social suspension.

Source:

HES, Department of Health.

Count of finished in-year admissions from waiting list and booked cases combined for cancer treatment. Cancer treatment defined as ICD-10 = COO-D48 in primary diagnosis and OPCS4 = AOO-X59 in primary operative procedure field. PCT of Residence = 5LE (Southwark PCT) NHS hospitals England 2000–01 to 2003–04

	Finished in-year admissions			
Time waited	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
0 to three months	1,117	1,042	901	847
more than three to six months	147	165	166	175
more than six to nine months	69	53	41	62
more than nine to 12 months	32	22	54	33
more than 12 to 15 months	6	28	30	9
more than 15 to 18 months	24	33	*	*
more than 18 to 24 months	7	7	*	—
more than 24 months	*	*	*	—
Not known	35	88	114	496

Notes:

1. Due to reasons of confidentiality, figures between one and five have been suppressed and replaced with *.
2. A finished in-year admission is the first period of in-patient care under one consultant within one healthcare provider, excluding admissions beginning before 1 April at the start of the data year. Please note that admissions do not represent the number of in-patients, as a person may have more than one admission within the year.
3. The main operation is the first recorded operation in the hospital episode statistics (HES) data set and is usually the most resource intensive procedure performed during the episode. It is appropriate to use main operation when looking at admission details, e.g. time waited, but the figures for "all operations count of episodes" give a more complete count of episodes with an operation.
4. The primary diagnosis is the first of up to 14 (seven prior to 2002–03) diagnosis fields in the HES data set and provides the main reason why the patient was in hospital.
5. Figures have not been adjusted for shortfalls in data (i.e. the data are ungrossed).
6. Time waited statistics from HES are not the same as the published waiting list statistics. HES provides counts and time waited for all patients admitted to hospital within a given period whereas the published waiting list statistics count those waiting for treatment on a specific date and how long they have been on the waiting list. Also, HES calculates the time waited as the difference

between the admission and decision to admit dates. Unlike published waiting list statistics, this is not adjusted for self-deferrals or periods of medical/social suspension.

Source:

HES, Department of Health.

Count of finished in-year admissions from waiting list and booked cases combined for hip replacements. Hip replacements defined as OPCS4 = W37-W39 and W46-W48 in primary operative procedure field. PCT of Residence = 5LE (Southwark PCT) NHS hospitals England 2000–01 to 2003–04

	Finished in-year admissions			
Time waited	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
0 to three months	23	24	15	30
more than three to six months	14	15	20	23
more than six to nine months	16	16	18	16
more than nine to 12 months	14	14	26	30
more than 12–15 months	8	11	18	8
more than 15–18 months	7	17	6	*
more than 18–24 months	*	6	*	*
more than 24 months	*	*	*	*
Not known	*	*	19	*

Notes:

1. Due to reasons of confidentiality, figures between one and five have been suppressed and replaced with *.

2. A finished in-year admission is the first period of in-patient care under one consultant within one healthcare provider, excluding admissions beginning before 1 April at the start of the data year. Please note that admissions do not represent the number of in-patients, as a person may have more than one admission within the year.

3. The main operation is the first recorded operation in the hospital episode statistics (HES) data set and is usually the most resource intensive procedure performed during the episode. It is appropriate to use main operation when looking at admission details, e.g. time waited, but the figures for "all operations count of episodes" give a more complete count of episodes with an operation.

4. The primary diagnosis is the first of up to 14 (seven prior to 2002–03) diagnosis fields in the HES data set and provides the main reason why the patient was in hospital.

5. Figures have not been adjusted for shortfalls in data (i.e. the data are ungrossed).

6. Time waited statistics from HES are not the same as the published waiting list statistics. HES provides counts and time waited for all patients admitted to hospital within a given period whereas the published waiting list statistics count those waiting for treatment on a specific date and how long they have been on the waiting list. Also, HES calculates the time waited as the difference between the admission and decision to admit dates. Unlike published waiting list statistics, this is not adjusted for self-deferrals or periods of medical/social suspension.

Source:

HES, Department of Health.

Sunderland Royal Hospital

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the provision of orthodontic surgeons at the Sunderland Royal hospital; and what plans he has to increase their numbers. [208988]

Mr. Hutton: This is a matter for the Chair of City Hospitals Sunderland National Health Service Foundation Trust. I have written to Mr. David Graham, Chair, informing him of my hon. Friend's inquiry.

Treatment Costs

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will estimate *(a)* the total cost of using the independent sector to treat NHS patients and *(b)* the cost of treating those patients in the NHS in each year since 1997. [208121]

Mr. Hutton: The information requested is not separately identified in the annual financial returns of national health service providers.

Waiting Times

Mr. John Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients in the *(a)* Solihull constituency and *(b)* borough of Solihull waited for more than six months for foot and ankle surgery under a podiatric surgeon in 2004. [208422]

Dr. Ladyman: This information is not available in the format requested.

The table shows the time waited for foot and ankle surgery for patients within Solihull Primary Care Trust (PCT), which includes residents from the Solihull constituency and the borough of Solihull, during 2003–04.

Waiting list and booked cases: Count of finished in year admissions distribution of time waited for foot and ankle surgery for Solihull PCT in national health service hospitals in England 2003–04

Time waited	*Number*
Under 3 months	76
2 to 6 months	81
6 months and over	25
Total admissions	183
Mean days	113.6
Median days	110

Notes:

1. Figures have not been adjusted for shortfalls in data ie that the data are ungrossed.

2. Hospital episode statistics (HES) are compiled from data sent by over 300 national health service trusts and primary care trusts (PCTs) in England. The Department liaises closely with these organisations to encourage submission of complete and valid data and seeks to minimise inaccuracies and the effect of missing and invalid data via HES processes.

3. Time waited statistics from HES are not the same as the published waiting list statistics. HES provides counts and time waited for all patients admitted to hospital within a given period, whereas the published waiting list statistics count those waiting for treatment on a specific date and how long they have been on the waiting list. Also, HES calculates the time waited as the difference between the admission and decision to admit dates. Unlike published waiting list statistics, this is not adjusted for self-deferrals or periods of medical/social suspension.

4. A finished in-year admission is the first period of in-patient care under one consultant within one healthcare provider, excluding admissions beginning before 1 April at the start of the data year. Please note that admissions do not represent the number of in-patients, as a person may have more than one admission within the year.

Source:

HES, Department of Health.

The figures are different to those given in my reply to the hon. Member of 14 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1082W, because processing of hospital episode statistics can lead to changes in the data over time.

Walk-in Centres

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the *(a)* social class, *(b)* income, *(c)* health, *(d)* morbidity and *(e)* mortality characteristics of the patients expected to use NHS walk-in centres at or near major railway stations. [208318]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 13 January 2005]:* All national health service walk-in-centres are open to anyone. We expect those who use each of the seven new centres to be sited at or near major railway stations to reflect the socio-economic characteristics of the local working and resident populations. A survey conducted by MORI in November 2004 confirmed that these centres would be welcomed and used by those who work in the vicinity. Actual use of these centres will be monitored as part of our planned evaluation.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Academy Schools

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what the minimum financial requirement per annum for public companies setting up academy schools is; and whether it has to be in cash; [207970]

(2) what the minimum financial requirement per annum for private companies setting up academy schools is; [208013]

(3) whether academy schools are allowed to borrow *(a)* on financial markets and *(b)* from banks. [208029]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: In general, Academy sponsors are required to provide 10 per cent. of the capital costs of establishing an Academy, up to a cap of £2 million. The balance is paid by the Department. Capital sponsorship in most instances is in cash, but can be in kind (for example ICT equipment) if the sponsorship shows value for money and appropriate to the needs of the Academy (and can be from a single person or company or group of sponsors). There is no requirement for sponsors to contribute to Academies running costs.

The Trusts which run Academies may borrow from the financial sector. However, like maintained schools, they would require the Secretary of State's consent to do so. The Secretary of State would only be likely to grant consent where a reasonable need to borrow was shown. Academy Trusts cannot borrow against assets that have been given to them for nil consideration (for example, land transferred from local authorities).

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) whether academy schools will be required to take the same proportion of disruptive pupils as other local schools; [207971]

(2) whether academy schools are required to be specialist schools; [208008]

(3) whether academy schools are *(a)* allowed and *(b)* required to be selective. [208055]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Academies are established in disadvantaged areas and are local schools for local children. In all cases, their admission arrangements are agreed with the Secretary of State as a condition of the Funding Agreement; they are consistent with the Code of Practice on admissions to maintained schools and with admissions law, as well as the Code of Practice on Special Educational Needs. Academies are required by their Funding Agreements to take part in their local Admissions Forum, and to have regard to its advice. Academies must also participate in the co-ordinated admission arrangements operated by the LEA for the area where they are situated.

In general, Academies showed a decrease in the number of permanent and fixed terms exclusions in 2003/04 compared to the previous year for the schools which they replaced.

Academies are required by their Funding Agreement to offer a broad and balanced curriculum with a specialism in one or more subjects.

Academies are required by law to cater for children of all abilities. Like maintained specialist schools, academies are allowed to admit up to 10 per cent. of pupils each year on the basis of their aptitude for the specialism concerned, where the specialism is covered by the relevant regulations.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the main differences are between city Academies and City Technology Colleges; and what proportion of public funding each receives. [208005]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The main differences between Academies and City Technology Colleges (CTCs) are around admissions and funding. A CTC is able to select those applicants who are most likely to benefit from the college's emphasis on science and technology, have the strongest motivation to succeed and intend to continue in full time education or training up to the age of 18. Unlike CTCs, Academies are required to comply with the codes of practice on admissions and admissions appeals, and to the admissions law as it applies to maintained schools. They are required to take part in local co-ordinated admissions arrangements. Academies must have regard to the code of practice on SEN and to the statutory guidance on inclusion.

Both CTCs and Academies receive 100 per cent. of their recurrent funding from the Department. CTCs and Academies are treated on the same basis for ongoing capital funding once open, in that the Department would generally fund 80 per cent. of such costs with the trust finding the remaining 20 per cent., though where work arises through statutory requirements the Department would meet all the costs.

The Department funds CTCs through a funding agreement with the Secretary of State. One fifth of the initial capital cost was paid by private sector sponsors who continue to contribute 20 per cent. towards all capital projects. The Department funds CTCs' running costs on the basis of a direct comparison with budgeted spending for secondary schools in the LEAs from which the CTCs collectively take their pupils. An overall average cost per pupil is derived from this comparison and applied to all the CTCs.

The Department also funds Academies through a funding agreement with the Secretary of State. Sponsors pay 10 per cent., up to a cap of £2 million of the capital cost of the project. The Department funds Academies' running costs on a comparable basis to maintained specialist schools within the LEA where the Academy is located

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether national teachers' pay scales apply to city academies; and whether they can pay higher salaries. [208006]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Academies are not bound by the Teachers Pay and Conditions of Service. They and their staff will be able to negotiate pay and conditions arrangements to meet the particular needs of the Academy and its pupils. Where Academies replace existing schools there will in many cases be a transfer of undertakings under the TUPE regulations.

We want Academies to respond innovatively to the challenges they face and the ability to negotiate their own pay and conditions is part of the increased flexibility they need to do that.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how many academy schools are operating; and how many more are planned; [208007]

(2) what targets have been set for the establishment of academy schools by May; [208015]

(3) how many *(a)* agreements have been reached and *(b)* expressions of interest have been received (i) to build new academy schools and (ii) to transfer existing schools to academy schools. [208009]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: There are currently 17 academies open across England. As announced in the Government's Five-year Strategy for Education, published in July 2004, our target is for 200 academies to be open or in the pipeline by 2010. No further academies are planned to open before May 2005.

Twenty-nine Funding Agreements have been agreed between the Secretary of State and academy sponsors. Of these, four are for entirely new academies and 25 involve the closure of predecessor schools. A further 35 expressions of interest have been received and approved, of which five are to be new academies and 25 are to involve the closure of predecessor schools. Five projects which had had approved expressions of interest have been abandoned in the feasibility stage. Two expressions of interest have been received but rejected as they were unsuitable for the programme. One further expression of interest for the replacement of an existing school has been received but has not yet been approved.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the source of public funding for academy schools is; how it is calculated; and whether it is set at the same level per pupil as for local authority schools in the same area. [208011]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The Government is committed to funding Academies on a comparable basis to other schools in their areas with similar characteristics. Each Academy receives a General Annual Grant from the Secretary of State to meet its normal running costs. This grant is calculated on the basis of the funding formula of the LEA in which it is situated, with an additional allowance for the money which LEAs hold back from maintained schools but which is for their benefit. General Annual Grant also includes a per pupil allowance in relation to the Academy specialism. Funding Academies on a comparable basis to other schools ensures the successes which they achieve are directly applicable to other schools in the same areas and circumstances.

In addition, Academies are eligible to receive Standards Fund grant, and certain other grants routed through LEAs, on the same basis as neighbouring maintained schools.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) under what circumstances academy schools are permitted to close; and whether the land and property of an academy school that closes *(a)* reverts to the local authority and *(b)* can be sold or used for other purposes; [208014]

(2) who will own academy schools' land and buildings; and what the terms of ownership will be. [208053]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: An Academy would be permitted to close in only rare circumstances and where interventions had failed. For example, if the Secretary of State had major concerns about the management of the Academy, where there were continued low standards with no sign of improvement or where the Academy Trust was found to be in significant breach of its Funding Agreement and had not remedied those breaches.

Ownership of any existing buildings or land required to establish an Academy is transferred from the current owner, usually the local education authority, to the Academy Trust before an academy opens. The Academy Trust is a charitable trust set up by the sponsor, responsible for the building and running of the Academy. Should the Academy close, ownership of the land and buildings would revert to the previous owner.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether her Department maintains a list of approved bidders for academy schools. [208054]

Derek Twigg: Yes. The Department also maintains lists of approved companies to provide Project Management Services, Construction Project Management Services and design teams. These have been drawn together through Official Journal of European Union (OJEU) tendering exercises.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) whether academy schools are required to have sixth forms; [208071]

(2) whether all academy schools have sixth forms. [208072]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Academies are not required to have sixth forms. Of the seventeen academies that are currently open, fifteen have, or will have, provision for sixth form students.

Adult Education

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what savings she estimates will accrue from the withdrawal of subsidies by *(a)* central and *(b)* local government to adult and continuing education. [208066]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: No savings will be accrued as funding has not been withdrawn. The Government agreed with the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) a budget of

£207.4 million in 2004–05 for adult education secured through local education authorities, an increase of 43 per cent. compared with funding in 2000–01 of £145 million. In addition the LSC has been consulting on reforming the planning and funding of non-qualification provision to meet our commitments to safeguard learning opportunities for personal and community development and to secure a coherent range of "first steps" learning opportunities in every area.

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* courses are being discontinued and *(b)* staff are being made redundant as a result of the withdrawal of funding for adult and continuing education. [208067]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Government are maintaining their commitment to safeguard the availability of these types of learning opportunities. The Government agreed with the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) a budget of £207.4 million in 2004–05 for adult education secured through local education authorities, an increase of 43 per cent. compared with funding in 2000–01 of £145 million.

Local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) together with local learning providers are charged with making decisions about the range of courses provided depending on local needs and demands. These are local decisions and there is no national record either of courses discontinued, or indeed new courses created, or on staff redundancies.

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many staff were employed in adult and continuing education in each of the last 10 years. [208069]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: There is no central data collection on staff numbers employed in delivering LEA-secured adult education, so it is not possible to provide the information requested.

Autism

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of *(a)* primary school and *(b)* secondary school teachers have received specialist training in (i) autism awareness and (ii) teaching techniques relevant for children with autism spectrum disorder. [206972]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: This information is not collected centrally by the Department. The National Autistic Society's 2002 report, Autism in Schools: Crisis or Challenge?, found that 19 per cent. of some 6,800 teachers surveyed had received some autism specific training. In the same year the Department together with the Department of Health published good practice guidance on autistic spectrum disorders one of the aims of which was to raise awareness amongst teachers and other professionals. Some 27,000 copies have been distributed in response to demand.

The Government's recently published SEN strategy, Removing Barriers to Achievement, recognises the importance of effective training and continuing professional development. The Department is working with the Teacher Training Agency to carry forward a number of practical proposals for strengthening teacher training in SEN and disability issues.

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many hours of intervention a pre-school child with autism spectrum disorder has access to. [206974]

Margaret Hodge: Government recognises the importance of early intervention for children with autistic spectrum disorders and relevant initiatives aim to ease access to informed intervention for pre-school children below the age of five. All three and four year olds are now entitled to a free part-time early education place, for at least 12 and a half hours a week, if their parents want one. The Government's special educational needs (SEN) strategy Removing Barriers to Achievement (February 2004) set out a programme for improving advice and support to, and the skills of, early years settings in meeting the needs of children with SEN. Local education authorities, where necessary, have duties and powers to assess pre-school children's SEN, including children with autistic spectrum disorders, and to draw up statements of SEN setting out the provision necessary to meet the child's needs. The provision, including the number of hours of any specialist intervention, will depend on the nature and intensity of the individual child's needs.

Information for parents on autistic spectrum disorders and related conditions is contained in a booklet available through the Government's Early Support Programme.

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children over the age of five years have been diagnosed with autism in the last 12 months; and if she will make a statement. [206975]

Margaret Hodge: The information requested is not collected centrally.

As at January 2004 the total number of Special Educational Needs children in England whose primary type of need is Autistic Spectrum Disorder is 31,260.

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children in each local education authority area have been diagnosed with autism. [207482]

Margaret Hodge: In January 2004, data on type of special educational needs (SEN) was collected for the first time. All schools were sent information about each of 11 types of need to help them to categorise pupils reliably, but the Department believes that for the first year of collection the data should be treated with considerable caution. We are therefore not publishing the data at local authority level this year.

As at January 2004 the total number of Special Educational Needs children in England whose primary type of need is Autistic Spectrum Disorder is 31,260.

Building Better Schools

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what discussions she has had with local education authorities involved in the first wave of the Building Better Schools programme; [209048]

(2) what representations she has received from areas involved in the first wave of the Building Better Schools programme; and if she will make a statement. [209049]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Since February 2004, when we announced the first wave of projects in Building Schools for the Future, we and our delivery partners, Partnerships for Schools, have given each of the 19 authorities tailored and dedicated support. Each authority has a contact officer from my Department to help deal with any education policy queries and a project director from Partnerships for Schools to help develop their business cases. We also contract with the 4ps to give the authorities advice and support about stakeholder consultation and involvement.

The level and frequency of discussions with, and representations from, the local authorities has varied according to the individual circumstances and needs of each project. Key themes of the discussions and representations have included: project affordability and scoping; 'joining up' other capital funding streams to make the most of the programme and develop extended schools; the funding arrangements for voluntary aided schools; the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs; and assessment of the potential role for academies in those areas.

Child Trafficking

Mr. Wills: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills which local authorities have trafficked children in their care; and which local authorities have had trafficked children in their care between 1999 and 2004. [207017]

Margaret Hodge: This information is not held centrally.

In November last year, the Government published provisional statistics on looked after children at a national level. It was an update from the previous publication which was released in March 2004.

The statistics included details of overall numbers of looked after children at 31 March, the number of children adopted in 2003–04, the number and qualifications achieved by care leavers in 2003–04 aged 16 and over, and the activity of 19-year-old former care leavers.

Mr. Wills: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the *(a)* country of origin and *(b)* purposes for which they were trafficked were of trafficked children in local authority care between 1999 and 2004. [207019]

Margaret Hodge: This information is not held centrally. Trafficking by its nature is a hidden crime, and there are no reliable figures for the numbers of children trafficked into the UK.

In November last year, the Government published provisional statistics on children looked after at a national level. It was an update from the previous publication which was released in March 2004.

The statistics included details of overall numbers of looked after children at 31 March, the number of children adopted in 2003–04, the number and qualifications achieved by care leavers in 2003–04 aged 16 and over, and the activity of 19 year old former care leavers.

Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what budget has been allocated to CAFCASSin each of the last two years; and how many staff have been employed by the Service in each of the last two years. [201862]

Margaret Hodge: The budget for CAFCASS has increased steadily since its formation in April 2001.

CAFCASS's budget allocation in 2002–03 was £84.5 million (on a cash basis and including £4 million unspent from 2001–02). The baseline budget for 2003–04 was £95 million. In addition, £2.5 million was provided to help with the transition from cash to resource accounting.

The total cost for the running of CAFCASS in the financial year 2003–04 was £99 million.

The budget allocation for 2004–05 is £107 million, representing an increase of £12 million over the baseline budget.

The total numbers of staff (full-time and part-time) employed at 1 April 2003 and 1 April 2004 were as follows:

1 April 2003

	Number
Full time	1,306
Part time	578
Total staff	1,884

In addition, there were 406 self-employed CAFCASS practitioners on 1 April 2003.

1 April 2004

	Number
Full time	1,360
Part time	558
Total staff	1,918

In addition, there were 441 self-employed CAFCASS practitioners on 1 April 2004.

Note:

The discrepancy between the total figures given here (1,884 and 1,918) and those quoted in the CAFCASS 2003–04 Annual Report (1,879 and 1,932) is because CAFCASS subsequently undertook a data cleansing exercise of its management information systems and redefined the criteria used for employed staff. Furthermore, CAFCASS had included Board members and agency staff in its historical data.

Children in Care

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) whether she plans to conduct a review of the effect of her Department's policies upon children in care; and if she will make a statement; [208097]

(2) whether she plans to conduct a review of the effect of her Department's policies upon children in care; and if she will make a statement. [208098]

Margaret Hodge: The Government is committed to improving the level of stability in the lives of looked after children, their educational support, and the outcomes they achieve. We have invested significantly in services for this group and continue to do so. The effect of policies on looked after children is monitored systematically through a variety of routes. We collect and publish a wide range of data from local authorities on an annual basis about services to and outcomes achieved by looked after children. Secondly, the draft proposals for the new joint area reviews of children services established by the Children Act 2004 mean that reports will focus specifically on this vulnerable group of children—both on the way services are working together to meet their needs within an area, and on the results achieved. We are also reviewing the National Minimum Standards used by the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) to inspect and register services for children, including those for fostering and adoption agencies and for residential child care, to consider if they could be better focused around outcomes for children.

City Technology Colleges

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many city technology colleges there are; how much the *(a)* private and *(b)* state sector contributed to their costs in the last year for which figures are available; and what the total costs per student were in (i) City Technology Colleges and (ii) other state schools in that year. [208016]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: There are 14 City Technology Colleges (CTCs) one of which is a City College for the Technology of the Arts. The CTCs have reported that they have received over £1.2 million from private sector sponsorship in cash or kind during the 2003/04 academic year. During the same period the Department has provided £76.6 million to CTCs by way of recurrent grants and £2.2 million for approved capital projects. The CTC Unit of Funding for pupils under school leaving age in the 2003–2004 academic year was £3,717. This was uplifted by 30 per cent. for post 16 pupils.

There is no equivalent per-pupil funding figure either directly to other state schools from LEAs or to LEAs, since in both cases the funding covers different responsibilities. The CTC unit of funding includes elements of funding for tasks/services that an LEA would normally provide for its schools but a CTC has to provide for itself. It excludes any area cost weighting which might also be received by a particular school.

The funding for to LEAs in England via Education Formula Spending and Revenue Grants was £4,290 per pupil aged 11–15 in the academic year 2003/04 (based on financial year figures from 2003–04 and 2004–05). This is a wider definition than the CTC unit of funding since it includes funding for all an LEAs responsibilities in relation to children aged 11–15, and the area cost adjustment.

Departmental Equipment

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many items of electrical equipment were used by her Department in the last year for which figures are available, broken down by *(a)* cost and *(b)* number of each type of item. [205729]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: This information could only be supplied at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much has been spent by her Department on *(a)* new furniture and *(b)* hired furniture in each year since 1997. [205609]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The cost of furniture spent in my Department in each year since 1997 is as follows:

	£
1997–98	2,189,057
1998–99	677,873
1999–2000	967,415
2000–01	2,201,357
2001–02	2,640,728
2002–03	1,167,656
2003–04	2,185,628

Unfortunately the information cannot be split between new furniture and hired furniture.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the cost of refurbishments in her Department was in each year since 1997; and what the planned expenditure is for 2005–06. [205670]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The cost of refurbishments carried out in my Department in each year since 1997 is as follows:

	£
1997–98	[1]—
1998–99	2,970,093
1999–2000	3,928,406
2000–01	4,604,749
2001–02	3,683,494
2002–03	5,290,833
2003–04	3,384,202

[1] his information can only be provided at disproportionate costs.

The estimated outturn for 2004–05 is £1,500,000 and the planned expenditure for 2005–06 is not known at this present time.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much has been spent by her Department on lighting in each year since 1997. [205874]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: This information could only be supplied at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Mobile Phones

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many departmental mobile telephones were used by Ministers, special advisers and officials in his Department and its predecessors in each year since 1997; at what cost; how many such telephones were lost or stolen in each year since 1997; and what the replacement costs were in each case. [202175]

Derek Twigg *[holding answer 6 December 2004]:* The total number of mobile phones in use at December 2004 was 1,140. Information on the number of mobiles in use in any given year, as opposed to the number purchased in each year, could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

The information on use of mobile phones by Ministers, special advisers and officials on a year by year basis could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

The replacement cost of mobile phones lost and stolen has been calculated at current prices and the total cost of mobile services is given for each year.

£

	Lost/stolen	*Replacement cost*	*Total cost*
1997–98	1	204.45	170,045.78
1998–99	0	0	168,298.72
1999–2000	1	204.45	218,889.09
2000–01	3	613.35	329,196.99
2001–02	3	613.35	374,248.87
2002–03	4	817.80	353,955.78
2003–04	9	1840.05	270,547.63
2004–05	7	1431.15	—

Departmental Publications

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to her answer of 10 January 2005 to question 207543 from the hon. Member for Fareham, how many pages there were in each of the publications sent to primary and secondary schools. [208962]

Derek Twigg: We strictly monitor and gatekeep the information that we automatically send to schools. Details of documents sent to schools in the period requested are detailed in Annex A.

The academic year 2002–03 saw a 50 per cent. reduction on the number of documents sent to all schools compared to the previous 2001–02 year.

Going forward, we have successfully piloted an online ordering system that will enable schools to choose what information they want from the Department and when. This will put schools in control of what they receive.

Devon School Budgets

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much funding will be allocated to Devon schools in 2005–06 to implement phase 3 of the National Agreement on Workforce Reform; and if she will have discussions with Devon teachers about the possible impact on school budgets. [209040]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The provisional local government funding settlement for 2005–06 was announced on 2 December 2004 and provided a good settlement for schools. All schools will receive at least the guaranteed per-pupil increases that we announced in July. The guarantee for secondary and special schools remains at 4 per cent. per pupil, but the guarantee for primary and nursery schools is higher at 5 per cent. per pupil. This is in recognition that these schools need extra support to implement the final phase of workforce reform from 1 September 2005, including guaranteed time for all teachers for planning, preparation and assessment activities. The package was welcomed by representatives of teachers, headteacher and support staff on the Workforce Agreement Monitoring Group.

To ensure that there is headroom above the guarantee all authorities will receive an increase in their School Formula Spending Share of at least 5.5 per cent. Devon's settlement for 2005–06 is significantly higher at 7 per cent. and Torbay will also receive a higher settlement of 6.5 per cent., giving both authorities greater flexibility to target resources at schools with particular pressures. Local education authorities have a great deal of freedom to decide how to allocate the available resources through their local funding formula. Therefore I think Devon teachers should press their case locally.

Entertainment Costs

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much has been spent on entertainment by his Department in each year since 1997, broken down by *(a)* food, *(b)* alcohol, *(c)* staff and *(d)* accommodation. [204349]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: All expenditure on official entertainment is made in accordance with departmental guidance on financial procedures and propriety, based on the principles set out in Government Accounting. The following table sets out such spending in £ thousand for DfES and its predecessor Department in the relevant years. It is not possible to split these figures into the elements requested. The figures exclude costs incurred as part of official events or formal meetings held to further departmental business.

£000

	Department for Education and Employment	*Department for Education and Skills*
1996–97	24	—
1997–98	21	—
1998–99	31	—
1999–2000	21	—
2000–01	20	—
2001–02	—	11
2002–03	—	16
2003–04	—	20

Foreign Language Teachers

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans she has to increase the number of teachers of modern foreign languages in *(a)* secondary and *(b)* primary schools; and if she will make a statement. [207933]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The Government's National Languages Strategy for England recognises the importance of developing a workforce to implement primary language learning. This year 580 places have been allocated for Primary Initial Teacher Training with a specialism in French, German, Spanish or Italian and we intend to expand the programme further next year to 725 places. In addition we allocate 50 primary MFL places a year to the Graduate Teacher Programme.

In addition to training for new teachers, we plan to increase numbers through Continuing Professional Development courses for existing primary teachers and through the contribution of teaching assistants and foreign language assistants.

At secondary level we have no plans to increase the number of secondary modern foreign language teachers, given that demand will begin to fall, in line with falling pupil numbers.

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans she has to improve *(a)* modern foreign language (i) teaching standards and (ii) take-up and *(b)* the variety of modern foreign languages available in schools, with particular reference to (A) GCSE and (B) A-level courses; and if she will make a statement. [207934]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Since the publication of the National Languages Strategy in December 2002, we have made much progress to improve teaching standards and take up of modern foreign languages in both primary and secondary schools.

At primary level, 19 local education authorities have taken up Key Stage 2 language pathfinder roles to develop ways of delivering primary languages; we are consulting on a draft framework for the teaching and learning of Key Stage 2 languages; we have recently committed £5 million to support primary language learning in 2005–06; and by the end of last year we had trained well over 1,000 new teachers with a modern foreign language specialism. In addition, many primary schools benefit from the resources and teaching expertise from their local specialist language college to support and deliver quality language learning programmes.

At secondary level, the Key Stage 3 National Strategy Modern Foreign Language programme, introduced into schools in 2003, is designed to contribute to the raising of standards in Modern Foreign Languages. The programme consists of a framework of objectives for teaching Modern Foreign Languages throughout Key Stage 3 and encourages teachers to draw on existing good practice and work together to become more effective so that pupils improve in what and how they learn. Since its introduction Ofsted have commented that the use of the framework has helped teaching and the approach it encourages is having a positive effect on the attitudes of pupils.

The changes to the statutory curriculum at Key Stage 4 were introduced to enable schools to offer more choice and flexibility to their pupils, facilitating the introduction of new types of learning—in particular more vocational approaches. The flexibility in the new curriculum creates space for students to pursue learning programmes that reflect their aspirations and needs as well as maintaining a strong grasp of the basics. In this new flexibility students have an entitlement to follow a course in Modern Foreign Languages.

The changes at Key Stage 4 should not impact on our able and enthusiastic linguists, who we expect will continue to study languages at GCSE, A-level and beyond. By introducing language learning at Key Stage 2 our ambition is that we engage pupils when we know they are more receptive, so that we maximise their potential for language learning and harness their enthusiasm in order that they continue to study languages during their secondary education and beyond.

The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority published guidance last year entitled "Modern Foreign Languages in the Key Stage 4 Curriculum" which provides detailed guidance for the provision of Modern Foreign Languages at Key Stage 4. It includes information on statutory requirements—including the range of languages schools can offer—qualifications and the different courses available. Schools must offer at least one course in an official language of the EU that leads to an approved qualification. Schools may, in addition, offer courses in any other foreign language(s).

To recognise the achievement of language learners of all ages, we are developing a new voluntary recognition scheme—The Languages Ladder. The scheme is currently being piloted in three languages and will be available to all schools in eight languages from September 2005.

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many teachers of modern foreign languages there were in secondary schools in each of the last five years; and if she will make a statement. [207935]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The following table shows the number of full-time foreign language teachers in maintained secondary schools as at November of 1996 and 2002. The figures are estimates based upon sample surveys that were carried out most recently in 1996 and 2002 only.

	1996	*2002*
French	15,500	16,000
German	6,900	6,900
Spanish	2,500	3,600
Other	2,700	1,400
Total	27,600	27,900

Source:

Secondary School Curriculum and Staffing Survey, 1996 and 2002

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will ensure equal status for A levels in minority ethnic community languages with European modern languages in university admissions criteria; and if she will make a statement. [207936]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Higher education institutions are responsible for their own admissions policies and practices. Universities and colleges take into account a range of factors in determining the suitability of a particular applicant, and we have no evidence that, within that assessment, A level qualifications in minority ethnic community languages are considered to be of any less value than European modern languages.

The Government's position is that applicants, parents, teachers and other stakeholders should have confidence that higher education admissions systems are fair. The recently completed review of admissions led by Professor Steven Schwartz concluded that they are generally fair. Professor Schwartz has though set out a series of high level principles as a basis for fair admissions which we hope that all universities and colleges will take steps to adopt as they review and develop their own admissions policies, practices and systems.

Funding

Mr. Luff: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list the total central Government funding per pupil for each local education authority in England from 1996–97 to 2004–05 calculated on the basis used for the figures provided to the hon. Member for Mid-Worcestershire on 9 November 2004; if she will provide average figures for *(a)* the shire counties and *(b)* England for each of these years on the same basis; and if she will provide estimated figures for 2005–06 on the same basis. [208655]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The figures provided to the hon. Member on 9 November were for the years 2003–04 and 2004–05 in cash terms and included the pensions transfer to Education Formula Spending and the Learning and Skills Council in 2003–04.

A set of tables for all LEAs which give both the real terms series for 1997–98 to 2004–05, and a cash terms series with no adjustment for the pensions transfer for the same time period, has been placed in the Library.

When providing a series of funding figures we would usually supply real terms figures and exclude the pensions transfer to EPS and the LSC to give the most meaningful comparison to years before the transfer occurred. We do not have comparable figures for the year 1996–97, nor do we yet have estimated figures for 2005–06.

Average figures for the shire counties and for England on these bases are given as follows:

Average funding per pupil aged 3–19

£

	Real terms, excluding pensions transfer to EPS and LSC in 2003–04 and 2004–05		*Cash terms, including the pensions transfer to EPS and LSC in 2003–04 and 2004–05*	
	Shire counties	*England*	*Shire counties*	*England*
1997–98	2,780	2,900	2,400	2,510
1998–99	2,820	2,950	2,500	2,620
1999–2000	2,920	3,080	2,650	2,800
2000–01	3,150	3,330	2,890	3,060
2001–02	3,290	3,490	3,100	3,280
2002–03	3,370	3,580	3,280	3,490
2003–04	3,480	3,710	3,550	3,790
2004–05	3,610	3,850	3,770	4,020

Note:

The figures given are total funding per pupil aged 3–19 via education formula spending/standard spending assessment and grants allocated at an LEA level. EFS/SSA are part of the wider local government system and are supported by council tax.

Mr. Laxton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much funding each school in Derby, North has received from the new deal for schools. [208488]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The funding for New Deal for Schools allocated to Derby City from 1997–98 to 2001–02 is set out in the following table.

Derby City LEA

	£000
1997–98	346
1998–99	1,150
1999–2000	1,183
2000–01	2,812

Decisions on detailed allocations to individual schools were made locally by LEAs. The breakdown of funds allocated to schools by constituency is not held centrally.

Mr. Patrick Hall: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills by how much funding for *(a)* lower, *(b)* middle and *(c)* upper schools in Bedford and Kempston has changed in real terms between 1997 and 2004. [207226]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The information requested is submitted to the Department according to local education authority areas, rather than districts within an LEA. Bedford and Kempston constituency forms part of Bedfordshire LEA. The information requested is only available from 2000–01 onwards. Due to changes in the school funding system, it is not possible to provide corresponding figures for previous years. The available information about funding in Bedfordshire local education authority is contained in the following table.

Total budget share (£)

	Primary	*Middle*	*Secondary*
2000–01	47,628,345	40,683,595	51,134,300
2004–05	57,627,898	45,203,408	60,545,380
Change	9,999,553	4,519,813	9,411,080

Notes:

1. The Information is taken from Bedfordshire LEA's section 52 budget statement.

2. These figures are the Individual Schools Budget (ISB) allocated to schools. In 2004–05 there was a further £747,818 unallocated Schools Budget (no unallocated ISB was reported in 2000–01).

3. In 2004–05 an additional £19.4 million was funded through the school standards grant and the devolved standard fund (of which £7.2 million was for primary schools, £3.3 million for middle deemed schools, £5.6 million for secondary schools and £3.3 million was unallocated) while in 2000–01 an additional £12.9 million was funded through the devolved standard fund (of which £1.9 million was for primary schools, £1 million for middle deemed schools, £1.3 million for secondary schools and £8.8 million was unallocated).

4. Prior to 1999–2000 budget data was not collected at school level. In 1999–2000 school level data were collected but amendments were not checked back with LEAs. If the data were to be made available externally, the cleansed data would need to be agreed by the LEAs which would require a significant amount of time and effort.

5. In 2000–01 school standards grants was not recorded on Section 52 Budget Table 2.

6. In 2004–05 Bedfordshire LEA also reported an unallocated Excellence in Cities (EiC) Grant of £229,000 (no EiC was reported as allocated). In 2000–01 EiC was reported within the devolved standard fund and will therefore be included in the additional £12.9million figure given above. This funding is not included in the above table.

7. All figures are as reported by the LEA in real terms (2003–04 prices) using the 23 December 2004 GDP deflators.

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the level of funding for schools in Hendon for 2005–06. [207941]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The information requested is produced according to local education authority areas rather than districts within an area. Hendon is a district of the London Borough of Barnet. The provisional local government settlement for 2005–06 was announced on 2 December 2004 and provided all authorities with an increase of at least 5.5 per cent. per pupil aged 3–15. Barnet's settlement for 2005–06 is significantly higher at 8 per cent. per pupil, giving the authority flexibility to target resources at schools with particular pressures.

GCSE grades

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what the percentage change was between 1997 and 2004 for the number of young people in the Leyton and Wanstead constituency achieving five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C; [208769]

(2) what the percentage change between 1997 and 2004 was for young people achieving five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C. [208770]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The following table shows the proportion of pupils achieving five or more grades A* to C at GCSE and equivalent from 1997 to 2004 and the percentage point change for *(a)* Leyton and Wanstead constituency and *(b)* England:

Percentage of 15 year old pupils[1] achieving five or more grades A to C at GCSE and equivalent[2]*

Percentage

	1997	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*Percentage point improvement 1997–2004*
Leyton and Wanstead	35.7	35.0	38.4	40.2	41.7	44.1	46.3	46.1	10.4
England	45.1	46.3	47.9	49.2	50.0	51.6	52.9	53.7	8.6

[1] As standard the results reported relate to pupils aged 15 at the start of the academic year i.e. 31 August and therefore reaching the end of compulsory education at the end of the school year.

[2] For 2004 only results incorporate GCSEs, GNVQs and a wide range of other qualifications approved pre-16. Prior to 2004 results are based on GCSEs and GNVQs only.

Holiday Centres

Mr. Letwin: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether she has assessed the level of information made available to parents about the standards of care of children provided by holiday centres. [207595]

Margaret Hodge: Holiday play schemes providing care for children aged under eight for more than two hours in any day and for more than five days a year are registered and inspected by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted).

Registration requirements are set out in national standards which define the required outcome and supporting criteria.

After inspection, Ofsted publishes a report which provides information to parents on the standards of care.

The Government have brought in new regulations clarifying Ofsted's duties to share information with parents and others, including information about the standards of care. These regulations came into force on 30 December 2004.

Much Dewchurch Steiner School

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what consultations she has had with Herefordshire council about the provision of Academy Status for the Much Dewchurch Steiner School; and if she will make a statement. [207913]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: My officials from Academies Division have been exploring a Steiner Academy proposal for Much Dewchurch and discussions are continuing. I understand that the hon. Member has previously written to my predecessor and to the Director of Education in Herefordshire, to express his full support for the proposal and his desire for it to progress without delay.

Newspapers and Periodicals

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list the *(a)* newspapers and *(b)* periodicals taken by her Department in each year since 1997; and how much the Department spent on each in each year. [207653]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: This information could be supplied only at disproportionate cost.

Non-qualified Teachers

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what progress has been made in recent discussions she has held with the National Union of Teachers on lessons being taken by non-qualified teachers. [208702]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: I have had no recent discussions with the NUT on this issue.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills under what circumstances non-qualified teachers are permitted to take lessons. [208703]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The circumstances under which non-qualified teachers, and support staff, can undertake "specified work"—including delivering lessons to pupils—are set out in the 'Education (Specified Work and Registration) (England) Regulations 2003'. The Regulations came into force on 1 August 2003.

Guidance has been published to accompany the regulations and a copy is in the House of Commons Library.

School Building

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many representations she has received from local education authorities not in the initial waves of Building Schools for the Future about funding required for replacement or new secondary schools. [207542]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: We have received 10 representations from local education authorities not in the initial waves of Building Schools for the Future since we announced waves two and three of that programme on 30 November 2004.

School Closures

Mr. Edwards: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what safeguards are in place to ensure that advice and information given by Directors of Education to local education authorities on the closure of schools is accurate, objective and balanced. [208873]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Directors of Education are employed by local education authorities and are accountable to them. It is therefore for local authorities to satisfy themselves that their Directors of Education provide a satisfactory level and quality of advice.

Policy and procedures for the closure of schools in Wales are devolved matters and therefore for the National Assembly for Wales.

Mr. Edwards: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what criteria she applies when determining whether to approve a statutory notice of closure on a primary school. [208876]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The Secretary of State has no role in the approval of proposals to close schools in England. For proposals published by the local education authority, where there are no objections, the LEA may decide to implement the proposals. In all other cases the proposals are passed to the local School Organisation Committee (SOC) for consideration. If the SOC cannot reach a unanimous decision, the proposals are passed to the Schools Adjudicator for the final decision.

In making their decision the SOC and schools adjudicator must have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State. This sets out a range of factors that must be considered. These include the views of interested parties, the impact of what is proposed on local standards, whether there is sufficient capacity to accommodate displaced pupils, length and nature of journey to alternative provision and the overall cost effectiveness of the proposals.

Policy and procedures for the closure of schools in Wales are devolved matters and therefore for the National Assembly for Wales.

Special Needs Education

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many special needs children there are in each local education authority area; and how much special needs funding *(a)* in total and *(b)* per child with special needs was provided in each of those local education authorities in the last year for which figures are available. [207483]

Margaret Hodge: A table showing the number of children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) in each local education authority has been placed in the House of Commons Library.

Funding for education is distributed to local authorities based on their education formula funding share. Local authorities then decide how best to allocate and distribute funding to schools and services, including funding for pupils with special educational needs (SEN). Some funding for SEN is delegated to schools to enable them to make additional arrangements and some is managed by the local authority. Local authorities report planned expenditure in their section 52 statements. Total planned expenditure for SEN reported for 2004–05 is £3,774,756,700 as at 13 December 2004.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what recent discussions she has held with Gloucestershire Local Education Authority on its proposals for the reorganisation of special needs education. [208247]

Margaret Hodge: Under arrangements introduced in the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, the consideration of proposals for establishing, altering, or discontinuing maintained special schools are a matter for local decision making.

No recent discussions have taken place between Ministers and Gloucestershire Local Education Authority concerning proposals for the re-organisation of special needs education.

Written Answers to Questions

Tuesday 18 January 2005

TREASURY

Alcohol-related Deaths (Humberside)

Shona McIsaac: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer in respect of how many deaths within the Humberside police area alcohol was found to be the primary cause in each of the past five years. [208364]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Ms Shona McIsaac, dated 18 January 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary question asking for how many deaths within Humberside police area, alcohol was found to be a primary cause in each of the last five years. (208364)

The latest year for which figures are available is 2003. The attached table shows the numbers of deaths among residents of the Humberside police area where the underlying cause of death indicated a condition directly related to alcohol use in the years 1999 to 2003.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) definition of alcohol-related deaths only includes those causes regarded as being most directly due to alcohol consumption. Apart from deaths due to accidental poisoning with alcohol, this definition excludes external causes of death, such as road traffic deaths and other accidents, and alcohol-related suicides and homicides. Estimates of the annual total number of deaths in which alcohol has played a role can therefore vary widely depending on the criteria used. The definition used by ONS allows for consistent comparisons over time for those deaths where a clear association with alcohol consumption can generally be assumed.

Alcohol-related deaths[1] for Humberside police area (which comprises the four unitary authorities of Kingston upon Hull, City of, East Riding of Yorkshire, North East Lincolnshire and North Lincolnshire)[2], 1999 to 2003[3]

	Number
1999	79
2000	73
2001	75
2002	80
2003	108

[1] For the years 1999–2000 the cause of death was defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision (ICD-9). The codes used by ONS to define alcohol-related deaths are listed below:

291—Alcoholic psychoses
303—Alcohol dependence syndrome
305.0—Non-dependent abuse of alcohol
425.5—Alcoholic cardiomyopathy
571—Chronic liver disease and cirrhosis
E860—Accidental poisoning by alcohol

For the years 2001–03 the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) was used. To maintain comparability with earlier years the following codes:

F10—Mental and behavioural disorders due to use of alcohol
142.6—Alcoholic cardiomyopathy
K70—Alcoholic liver disease
K73—Chronic hepatitis, not elsewhere classified
K74—Fibrosis and cirrhosis of liver
X45—Accidental poisoning by and exposure to alcohol

The selection of codes to define alcohol-related deaths is described in: Baker A and Rooney C (2003). Recent trends in alcohol-related mortality, and the impact of ICD-10 on the monitoring of these deaths in England and Wales. "Health Statistics Quarterly" 17, pp 5–14.

[2] Usual residents of these areas.

[3] Deaths occurring in each calendar year.

Child Trust Fund

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will extend to older children the advantages of saving up to £1,200 a year tax free, which is available to younger children under the Child Trust Fund. [209270]

John Healey: The Child Trust Fund goes live on 6 April 2005 and the Government have already backdated eligibility to September 2002. Older children can benefit from tax-free saving too. The market offers a wide range of savings and investment accounts designed especially for children from National Savings and Investment products to Friendly Societies, banks and building societies. Every child has a personal tax allowance of £4,745 a year and parents are taxed on their child's account only when the gift produces more than £100 gross income per year, per parent. The Child Trust Fund offers new opportunities and new incentives that never existed before. In conjunction with other saving products offered by the market it will help to encourage saving for all children. The Government keeps all saving incentives under review.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list the European Union directives and regulations relating to his Department that have been implemented in each of the last two years, specifying *(a)* the title and purpose of each, *(b)* the cost to public funds of each and *(c)* the cost to businesses of each. [202501]

Mr. Timms: The Treasury plays a leading role in the UK's EU policy on financial services, tax and certain aspects of social security provision.

Information on directives and regulations in the field of financial services can be found in the document "The EU Financial Services Action Plan: Delivering the FSAP in the UK", published by HM Treasury in conjunction with the Financial Services Authority and the Bank of England in May 2004. The Financial Services Action Plan (FSAP) set out a programme of legislative and other action in the area of financial services. The above document sets out the purpose of FSAP and related measures, with a timetable for their implementation, and is available via the Treasury's public website.

Over the last two years, the Treasury has led on the implementation of a number of tax directives; of which the principal ones have been:

The implementation of Directive 2003/93 removed VAT from the scope of the Mutual Assistance Directive (77/799) and introduced a separate regulation for the exchange of information on VAT by replacing Regulation 218/92 with the VAT Administrative Co-operation Regulation (1798/2003).

> The Energy Products Directive 2003/96 updated and replaced 98/81 and 92/82. The updates related to new energy products such as biodiesel being incorporated into duty suspension arrangements. Those parts of the EPD not previously implemented were implemented by The Biofuels and other fuel substitutes (Payment of Excise Duty etc.) Regulations 2004 and the Excise Warehousing (Energy Products) Regulations 2004.
>
> Directive 2003/92 amends the sixth VAT Directive (DIR 77/388), 7 October 2003—changing the place of supply of gas and electricity so that supplies to taxable dealers take place (and are therefore taxed) where the dealer is established, and supplies to others take place where the gas or electricity is used and consumed.
>
> Directive 2002/38 amends the sixth VAT Directive (DIR 77/388), 15 May 2002 (implemented on 1 July 2003)—changing the place of supply of electronically supplied services and broadcasting services, provided by non-EU businesses, so that supplies to taxable customers take place (and are therefore taxed) where the customer is established, and supplies to others take place where the broadcasting services are used and consumed or in the case of electronically supplied services, where the customer resides.
>
> Directive 2003/49 is concerned with a common system of taxation applicable to interest and royalty payments made between associated companies of different member states. The purpose is to allow for the flow of interest and royalty payments between companies defined in the directive situated in different member states without taxation in the country in which the payment arose.
>
> Directive 2003/93/EC amends Directive 77/799/EEC concerning mutual assistance by the competent authorities of the member states in the field of direct and indirect taxation. The purpose is to strengthen co-operation between tax administrations in member states. (This is linked to Council Regulation EC 1798/2003 on cooperation in the field of VAT.)
>
> Directive 2003/48/EC relates to taxation of savings income in the form of interest payments. The purpose is to combat tax evasion by individuals on cross-border savings income. Under the directive, information will be collected automatically about the payment of savings income to residents in certain other countries and exchanged with tax authorities in those countries. During a transitional period, until they implement automatic exchange of information, three member states—Austria, Belgium and Luxembourg—will instead apply a withholding tax on cross-border interest payments made to individuals. Council Decision 2004/587/EC set the date of application of Directive 2003/48/EC as 1 July 2005.
>
> Directive 2004/56/EC amending Directive 77/799/EEC has regard to mutual assistance by the competent authorities of the member states in the field of direct taxation, certain customs duties and taxation of insurance premiums. The purpose is to improve, expand and modernise the original rules.
>
> Directive 2004/66/EC amended Directive 2003/48/EC concerning taxation of savings income in the form of interest payments. The purpose is to allow for the accession of the new member states.
>
> 2004/76 amending Directive 2003/49/EC concerning a common system of taxation applicable to interest and royalty payments made between associated companies of different member states. The purpose is to allow for the accession of the new member states.

EC regulations are, in general, directly applicable in the member states, without the need for further incorporation into national law. However, some regulations require UK measures to make them workable and enforceable. Some regulations enact small or technical amendments. Since 17 April 2002, HM Treasury has implemented:

> Regulation 792/2002 amending Regulation No. 218/92, 15 May 2002 (implemented on 1 July 2003), concerning the provision of a special scheme for non-EU businesses, making supplies of electronically supplied services, enabling VAT to be accounted for electronically in all member states.
>
> Council Regulation (EC) 859/2003 of 14 May 2003 extending the provisions of Regulation (EEC) 1408/71 and Regulation (EEC) 574/72 to cover nationals of third countries who are not already covered by the provisions solely on the grounds of their nationality. These regulations remove barriers to free movement of workers within the Community and provide for the co-ordination of member states' social security systems.

We do not hold information on the costs to public funds of implementation. regulatory impact assessments (RIAs) are produced for all proposals, including European legislation, likely to impose costs on business, charities or voluntary organisations. Copies of these are placed in the Libraries of the House, and on the Treasury's public website. In some cases, new directives and regulations may be deregulatory measures that impose no costs, or even reduce costs for business.

European Constitution

John Cryer: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what discussions he has had with ministerial colleagues regarding their expenditure on matters relating to the constitutional treaty for the European Union. [208760]

John Healey: Departmental expenditure on matters relating to the constitutional treaty for the European Union would be agreed as normal through Treasury approval of departmental estimates. Rules on the conduct of referendums, including on referendum expenses, are laid out in the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000.

Fairshare Scheme

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans he has to identify alternative funding for the Fairshare scheme; and if he will make a statement. [208636]

Estelle Morris: I have been asked to reply.

This is a lottery initiative and any further funding will be a matter for the Big Lottery Fund. The Big Lottery Fund is consulting widely about the new programmes it will launch later this year. These programmes will include an emphasis on tackling disadvantage and ensuring all parts of the country receive a fair share of Big Lottery Fund grants. We are encouraging everyone with an interest in Fairshare to join in the consultation and help the Big Lottery Fund design the new arrangements.

Hospitals (Performance Targets)

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Health about allowing health service managers to set hospital performance targets. [209085]

Mr. Boateng: During Spending Review 2004 the Chancellor and the Secretary of State for Health agreed there should be fewer national targets and greater devolution to local NHS organisations, giving them more scope to set local targets within a framework of clear national standards.

Ministry of Defence Sites (Excess Profits)

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many times since 1997 the clawback clause to recover excess profits on former Ministry of Defence sites has been invoked; which sites were involved; what the sum involved was in each case; and if he will make a statement. [208687]

Mr. Boateng: Payments under the Profit Share Agreement with Annington Homes Ltd. (referred to in the question as 'clawback') are triggered when £1 million is due. A comprehensive list of all the sites to which the payments refer and what sums are involved for each sale is not kept in the form requested and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. However, to date, the payments total over £110 million with about 100 sites having been released wholly to Annington and about 125 sites partially released.

National Insurance Fund

Adam Price: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how much money is contained in the National Insurance Fund; [208404]

(2) how much money has been allocated to the NHS from the National Insurance Fund in each of the last five years. [208405]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer the hon. Member to the 'Report by the Government Actuary's on the drafts of the Social Security Benefits Up-rating order and Social Security' published each year on the Government Actuary's Department website at www.gad.gov.uk/Publications/Social_Insurance.htm.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he will reply to the questions tabled by the right hon. Member for Birkenhead, on *(a)* 13 December 2004, reference 205303 and *(b)* 16 December 2004, reference 206610. [209466]

Dawn Primarolo: I have already done so.

Schools (Performance Targets)

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Education and Skills about allowing headteachers to set performance targets in schools. [209053]

Mr. Boateng: The Chancellor has regular discussions with the Secretary of State for Education and Skills about a range of matters, including the use of performance targets.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the contracts signed by his special advisers differ from the Model Contract for Special Advisers. [207234]

Mr. Timms: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by the Prime Minister on 17 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 753W.

State Banqueting

Lynne Jones: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the cost to public funds was of the state banquet on 18 November 2004; and what the cost to public funds has been of state banqueting in each of the last five years. [208233]

Mr. Rammell: I have been asked to reply.

The cost to public funds of food, drink and printing for the banquet on 18 November 2004 and for state banqueting in each of the last five years was as follows:

		£
18 November 2004	French special visit	9,899.88
1 December 2004	Korean state visit	11,656.81
5 May 2004	Polish state visit	8,524.53
19 November 2003	United States state visit	8,906.93
24 June 2003	Russian state visit	7,893.07
6 November 2001	Jordanian state visit	10,538.67
12 June 2001	South African state visit	8,900.74
16 February 2000	Danish state visit	8,144.81

No inward State or Special Visits took place in 2002 due to Her Majesty The Queen's Golden Jubilee celebrations.

In addition to the costs specified in the table, each banquet will have attracted a staff cost. However, staff costs are recorded for each visit in its entirety and to attempt to identify the amounts applicable to each banquet would incur disproportionate cost.

Tax Credits

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much has been paid in compensation by the Inland Revenue to tax credit claimants in each month in *(a)* 2003–04 and *(b)* the current tax year. [205303]

Dawn Primarolo *[holding answer 16 December 2004]*: The circumstances in which Inland Revenue will make compensation payments to tax credits claimants are explained in Code of Practice 1 "Putting things right when we make mistakes".

A copy of this leaflet is sent with all replies to complaints and is readily available on the Inland Revenue website. The amounts paid in compensation to tax credit claimants, up to the end of December 2004 are detailed:

	Value of compensation paid out (£000)
April 2003	—
May 2003	1
June 2003	2
July 2003	3
August 2003	32
September 2003	39
October 2003	36
November 2003	30
December 2003	25
January 2004	24
February 2004	56
March 2004	61
2004–05	
April 2004	105
May 2004	145
June 2004	121
July 2004	100
August 2004	107

	Value of compensation paid out (£000)
September 2004	89
October 2004	84
November 2004	80
December 2004	81

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer in how many *(a)* working tax credit and *(b)* child tax credit cases it has not been possible to amend the circumstances affecting their tax credit award despite notification having been given to the Inland Revenue because of IT failures; and if he will make a statement. [206610]

Dawn Primarolo: There are, from time to time, small numbers of tax credits awards where there are difficulties in completing some of the award calculations on the tax credits IT. system. Where a claimant notifies a change in circumstances, in such circumstances, any alteration to the amount of the tax credit payments is calculated clerically.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the take-up rate for *(a)* working tax credit and *(b)* child tax credit was for (i) 2003–04 and (ii) the current tax year in England and Wales; and if he will make a statement. [209468]

Dawn Primarolo: No estimates of take-up rates for tax credits will be available until household survey data for 2003–04 have been analysed. Subject to ensuring the data and methodology are sufficiently robust, we expect the analysis to be completed towards the end of 2005–06.

Unemployment (Leyton and Wanstead)

Harry Cohen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people were unemployed in Leyton and Wanstead constituency in *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* 2004; and what percentage change that represents. [208766]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Harry Cohen, dated 18 January 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about unemployment in the Leyton and Wanstead Parliamentary Constituency. (208766)

The estimates available relate to the twelve-month periods ending in February 1997 and February 2004, the latest period for which information is available. In these periods the numbers of unemployed people, who were resident in the Leyton and Wanstead Parliamentary Constituency, were 6,000 and 5,000 respectively.

These estimates from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) are, as with any sample survey, subject to sampling variability and the estimates of changes over time for local areas are particularly affected.

A more reliable indication of change between 1997 and 2004 at Parliamentary Constituency level is the number of people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA). The annual average number of people resident in the Leyton and Wanstead constituency claiming JSA benefits in 1997 was 4,158. The corresponding average for the first 11 months of 2004 was 2,310. Between the two years there was a fall of 44 per cent.

TRANSPORT

E-mails

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on his Department's policy regarding the retention of e-mails in electronic form *(a)* after and *(b)* up to 1 January 2005; and what instructions have been given regarding the deletion of e-mails prior to 1 January 2005. [206946]

Charlotte Atkins: I refer the hon. Member to our replies to the hon. Member for Guildford (Sue Doughty) on 13 January 2005, *Official Report*, columns 598–99W.

Heathrow

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he will list the *(a)* working groups and *(b)* work streams under way under Project Heathrow; and what deadlines have been set for each work stream; [208495]

(2) if he will list the members of the mixed-mode working group of Project Heathrow; [208496]

(3) if he will place in the Library copies of the working papers of the working groups under Project Heathrow. [208506]

Charlotte Atkins: The forward work programme on Heathrow encompasses a range of activities and working arrangements with various parties. Much of this is work in progress and there are no plans at present to deposit copies of all papers in the Library. Details of the work programme can be found on the Department's website, along with notes of meetings of the air quality technical panels. Further papers will be published on the Department's website as work progresses, in accordance with the Department's publication scheme.

The initial work to identify possible mixed mode options and develop proposals is being led by BAA. There is no Departmental working group, although the Department is being kept closely informed.

All the work is designed to enable concluded views to be reached before the end of next year on the prospects for further development at Heathrow, consistent with the environmental conditions set out in the Air Transport White Paper.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether the contracts signed by his special advisers differ from the Model Contract for Special Advisers. [207232]

Charlotte Atkins: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister, on 17 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 753W.

Telephone Numbers

Mr. Tyler: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much revenue his Department has received from the use of non-geographic 0870 telephone numbers for the period 1 October 2003 to 30 September. [205824]

Charlotte Atkins *[holding answer 20 December 2004]*: The Department for Transport HQ buildings do not have any centrally provided 0870 numbers.

Departmental Agencies do use 0870 numbers.

VOSA has two 0870 numbers which raised £4,627.68 in the period.

The DVLA raised £1.1 million.

US Landing Rights

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether UK Government policy permits the *(a)* touching down and *(b)* refuelling in the UK of US aircraft, where such aircraft are carrying individuals destined for interrogation in countries that routinely use torture in their prisons. [208340]

Charlotte Atkins: The Chicago Convention on International Civil Aviation entitles foreign civil aircraft to make technical stops, for example for refuelling, without requiring the permission of the state it stops in. As such the Department is not notified if technical stops of this nature are made.

DEFENCE

Asian Tsunami

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence on what date his Department first considered providing logistical support and heavy-lifting helicopters to countries hit by the Indian Ocean tsunami; and what assessment has been made of the merits of the re-deployment of personnel and equipment from Iraq to disaster-hit countries. [208236]

Mr. Ingram: Ministry of Defence officials and Ministers initially learned of the Indian Ocean earthquake through departmental duty officers and broadcast media on Boxing Day 2004. The first formal contact to discuss the implications of the earthquake occurred between DfID and MOD officials early that day. Over subsequent days, MOD and the Permanent Joint Headquarters explored options for supporting DfID in the relief operation, culminating in decisions to provide military capabilities—particularly airlift and a maritime presence—on 30 December. Deployment of military assets commenced on 30 December. This included the re-deployment of several assets including HMS Chatham and RFA Diligence to aid the relief effort.

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence at what time (UK time) his Department learned of the earthquake off Sumatra on 26 December 2004; and what actions were set in train as a result. [208237]

Mr. Ingram: Ministry of Defence officials and Ministers initially learned of the Indian Ocean earthquake through departmental duty officers and broadcast media on Boxing Day 2004. The first formal contact to discuss the implications of the earthquake occurred between DfID and MOD officials early that day. Over subsequent days, MOD and the Permanent Joint Headquarters explored options for supporting DfID in the relief operation, culminating in decisions to provide military capabilities—particularly airlift and a maritime presence—on 30 December. Deployment of military assets commenced on 30 December. Subsequently a number of further niche capabilities have been provided to support the DfID-led relief operation.

Mr. David Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what military assistance the UK has provided following the tsunami disaster; and what plans he has made for further military assistance. [208331]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 17 January 2005]:* The Ministry of Defence has reacted quickly with other Government Departments in responding to this disaster, with the focus being on assisting the UN through DfID, with whom we are working very closely, and the provision of direct relief where appropriate.

The following military assets have been assigned to assist in the relief operation in the Indian Ocean:

The frigate HMS Chatham (which carries two Lynx helicopters) was redirected to the area on 30 December, arriving on 3 January; and the support ship RFA Diligence, already in the region, joined Chatham off Sri Lanka on 5 January. These vessels have undertaken a number of relief tasks, including assistance to the town of Baticoloa in the East of Sri Lanka, and provision of engineers to the Maldives to assist with refurbishment of generators and desalination equipment. Chatham and Diligence have worked closely with an Observation, Liaison and Reconnaissance Team (OLRT) which deployed to Colombo on 31 December, part of which also deployed to the Maldives on 6 January.

Royal Air Force C-17 and C-130 transport aircraft have also been assisting in the aid operation since 31 December, including through the delivery of UN infrastructure equipment and medical and other relief supplies into the worst affected areas.

A further OLRT deployed to Indonesia on 2 January, including to the Aceh region. MOD liaison officers are deployed with the US, Australian and Indonesian military headquarters in the region.

The Indonesian Government has accepted an offer of additional technical support in the form of two Ball 212 helicopters from the Gurkha Garrison in Brunei. These two aircraft are planned to deploy to the area on 12 January. Further, small, deployments of niche capabilities such as logistics planners and engineers have also taken place in response to DfID and OLRT requests.

UK MOD continues to work closely with Governments in the region, the UN and DfID to determine the requirement for military assistance over the coming period.

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Hercules C130 planes from RAF Lyneham have been made available for the aid effort in the Indian Ocean; and how many of them have been deployed. [208816]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 17 January 2005]:* Five Hercules C130 aircraft were identified as available for deployment. To date DfID have only called forward two of these aircraft. A C17 aircraft and a TriStar aircraft have also been tasked to provide relief aid to the affected region.

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence for what reason the deployable field hospital at RAF Lyneham is not being used for disaster relief in the Indian Ocean. [208819]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 17 January 2005]:* Ministry of Defence has offered support to enable UN-led relief operations in the affected region. The requests for MOD assets and capabilities have been co-ordinated by DfID. To date DfID representatives and the MOD OLRT (Operational Level Recce Team) in theatre have not identified a requirement for deployable field hospitals to be sent to the region.

Electronic Devices

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many electronic devices are owned by the Department, broken down by type. [207679]

Mr. Caplin: The Ministry of Defence and its staff use thousands of electronic devices in the delivery of its business on a daily basis. The quantity and classification by type of these devices is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Gulf War Illnesses

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he has discussed with his US counterparts the findings of the Report on Scientific Progress in Understanding Gulf War Illnesses of September 2004 commissioned by the US Secretary for Veteran Affairs; and if he will make a statement. [209149]

Mr. Caplin *[holding answer 17 January 2005]:* No.

Invoices

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the average length of time was between the date of invoices issued to his Department from a supplier and payment by the Department of the invoice in the last 12 months for which figures are available; what percentage of these invoices were paid within 30 days of the date of issue of the invoice; what percentage of these invoices remained unpaid after 90 days; and if he will make a statement on the Department's policy on the payment of invoices issued to it. [200616]

Mr. Caplin: The Ministry of Defence does not keep statistics on the average length of time taken to pay suppliers' invoices. The vast majority of invoices issued to the Ministry of Defence from suppliers are submitted directly to the Defence Bills Agency, Liverpool. In 2003–04, the Agency paid 99.98 per cent. of all valid bills within 11 calendar days of receipt. Only three invoices (out of the 4.9 million processed) took longer than 30 days, and none remained unpaid after 90 days.

The Government are committed to improving the payment culture in the UK in order to create a fair and stable business climate. Government departments and their agencies should aim to pay all invoices not in dispute within 30 days or within the agreed contractual terms if otherwise specified.

As you can see, the Department fully supports this policy.

Iraq

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many UK military personnel he expects will be in Iraq at the time of the January election. [207995]

Mr. Hoon *[holding answer 17 January 2005]:* As at 14 January 2005, approximately 8,950 United Kingdom armed forces personnel were serving on Op. Telic. Of these, approximately 8,150 are based within Iraq.

We anticipate that the figures above will increase by approximately 400 by 30 January 2005, the date of the Iraqi elections, with the arrival of the Extremely High Readiness Reserve on 17–19 January.

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he plans to publish the assessment undertaken by his Department of the United States Department of Defense Report on the Khamisiyah chemical weapons storage bunker in Iraq. [208788]

Mr. Caplin: The Ministry of Defence assessment of the United States Department of Defense report on Khamisiyah is currently being finalised and the intention is to publish this shortly.

Mirach Target Drone

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the estimated out-of-service date for the Mirach target drone is. [208793]

Mr. Ingram: Under current arrangements it is planned that the Mirach target will be in service until 2007. It may continue in service beyond that date as part of the successor Combined Aerial Target Service but no decisions have yet been taken.

RAF (Sexual Discrimination Survey)

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will place in the Library the survey on sexual harassment, sexual discrimination and bullying in the Royal Air Force which was reported in July. [207587]

Mr. Caplin: Yes.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether departmental special advisers have attended meetings with external *(a)* bodies and *(b)* individuals, in their official capacity and without Ministers, since May 1997. [203448]

Mr. Caplin: Special advisers hold meetings with a wide range of external representatives in their official capacity. All such meetings are conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Conduct for special advisers.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether departmental special advisers have made speeches in their official capacity since May 1997. [203505]

Mr. Caplin: Any speeches made by special advisers in an official capacity are conducted in accordance with the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers.

Victoria Cross Memorial (Public Access)

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make it his policy to allow visits by the public to the Victoria Cross memorial and other areas of his Department's building in Whitehall; and if he will make a statement. [206970]

Mr. Caplin: Visits by small groups of members of the public to certain areas of the Ministry of Defence's Main Building in Whitehall, such as the Victoria Cross and George Cross Memorial and the Henry VIII Wine Cellar, will be possible but only by prior arrangement and as security circumstances permit. Considerations of safety and security preclude open access and may lead to pre-arranged visits being cancelled at short notice.

Groups wishing to visit should apply via the 'Visiting Ministry of Defence Properties' section of the MOD website: http://www.mod.uk/aboutus/visits/

Pictures of the Victoria Cross and George Cross Memorial can be found on the Defence Image Database: http://www.photos.mod.uk

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

Smoking

John Mann: To ask the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire, representing the House of Commons Commission in how many rooms in the House to which hon. Members have access, other than their offices, smoking is *(a)* permitted and *(b)* banned. [207869]

Sir Archy Kirkwood: The Members' Handbook contains guidance on places where hon. Members may currently smoke in the House of Commons, including a list of designated non-smoking areas. In the outbuildings there is a presumption that common areas are non-smoking unless designated otherwise. The Commission will shortly be considering policy on smoking in the light of a review which it initiated in July 2004.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Cricket Broadcasting Contract

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what discussions she has had with the cricket authorities on their decision not to sign a contract for the broadcasting of domestic test cricket on terrestrial stations; and whether she has considered re-listing test cricket. [209043]

Mr. Caborn: I was briefed by the England and Wales Cricket Board on the outcome of their negotiations. Cricket test matches played in England are protected under the listing provisions, but only in respect of secondary coverage, such as highlights. Of the terrestrial channels, Five are to televise test highlights at peak time and live commentary will be available on BBC radio. It may be necessary to review the statutory list as digital take-up increases but any such review would not affect contracts already entered into.

Digital Television

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what estimate she has made of the take-up of digital television; and if she will make a statement. [209177]

Estelle Morris: According to figures published by Ofcom, digital television was in 55.9 per cent. of households at the end of the third quarter of 2004. This is up from 47 per cent. at the same point in 2003, with satellite, terrestrial and cable all contributing to this progress.

External Suppliers

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many tenders were let by her Department to external suppliers in financial year 2003–04; and what the value was. [209116]

Mr. Caborn: 69 contracts were let by competitive tender during the period 2003–04 with a value of £6,073,646. A number of these contracts were call-off contracts still extant so the final value of those is not yet known.

Horseracing

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (1) what discussions she has had with the British Horseracing Board on the recent relevant European Court of Justice ruling; and what the outcome of the discussions was; [209130]

(2) what representations she has received on extending the life of the Levy Board. [209131]

Mr. Caborn *[holding answer 17 January 2005]:* I have received a number of representations from within the racing industry that the abolition of the Levy Board should be deferred and have met representatives of the British Horseracing Board (BHB) on several occasions since the European Court of Justice ruling was announced.

In response to the ruling the British Horseracing Board has commissioned an independent review into the future funding of racing. I welcome this review and look forward to seeing its conclusions and the views of the BHB, the Levy Board and the Association of British Bookmakers.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will amend the Betting, Gaming and Lotteries Act 1963 to allow flood-lit all-weather horse racing. [209381]

Mr. Caborn: The Betting Gaming and Lotteries Act 1963 includes no prohibition on flood-lit all-weather horse racing. However, it does prohibit the late-night opening of Licensed Betting Offices (LBOs) during the winter season.

The Gambling Bill will repeal the 1963 Act and will not seek to replicate any provisions relating to LBO opening hours, which will in future be determined by the local licensing authority following guidance from the Gambling Commission.

Lottery Funding (Sunderland)

Mr. Etherington: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assessment she has made of the contribution the Lottery has made to combating *(a)* social exclusion and *(b)* financial exclusion in Sunderland; and if she will make a statement. [209535]

Estelle Morris: Lottery distributors are required to take into account the need to reduce economic and social deprivation in making awards. It can be difficult to determine precisely the extent of their contribution to reducing social and financial exclusion but a significant number of Lottery-funded projects have helped to regenerate inner cities, create employment and strengthen communities. Since the Lottery began there have been 240 awards made in the constituency of Sunderland north totalling £24.1 million. In the local authority area of Sunderland, there have been 721 projects totalling £69 million.

Lottery Sports Funding

Mr. Gale: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what percentage of National Lottery Funding for sport paid through Sport England is available for open bidding in 2004–05; and what estimate she has made of the cash value of National Lottery Sports funding made available through Sport England that will be available for open bidding in 2005–06. [208420]

Mr. Caborn *[holding answer 17 January 2005]:* Sport England budgeted to make award commitments of £148.4 million in 2004–05. Of this £71.1 million—equivalent to 48 per cent.—was budgeted to be available through open application. Sport England's current estimated awards budget for 2005–06 includes £42.5 million which would be available through open application. The budget for 2005–06 has not yet been finalised.

Newspapers and Periodicals

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will list the *(a)* newspapers and *(b)* periodicals taken by her Department in each year since 1997; and how much the Department spent on each in each year. [207640]

Mr. Caborn: I am arranging for copies of a document listing the *(a)* newspapers and *(b)* periodicals taken by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in each year since 1997 to be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

How much the Department spent on each title in each year can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

The Department's total spend on *(a)* newspapers and *(b)* periodicals (excluding yearbooks and directories and including magazines) in each financial year since 1997–98 is shown in the table.

£

	Type of publication		
	Newspaper	Periodical	Total
1997–98	9,135	16,607	25,742
1998–99	8,747	14,462	23,209
1999–2000	10,800	17,185	28,356
2000–01	12,221	13,415	25,636
2001–02	13,432	14,802	28,234
2002–03	13,064	16,329	29,393
2003–04	11,978	16,557	28,535
2004–05	12,196	17,045	29,241

Parking Spaces

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many car parking spaces are provided for those *(a)* working in and *(b)* visiting her Department. [208973]

Mr. Caborn: The Department has four premises in London and provides a total of 10 car parking spaces, five of which are for Ministers and Permanent Secretary and two for registered disabled employees. The remaining three spaces are available to visitors and contractors and, exceptionally, staff. Two other spaces were converted to bicycle racking during 2004–05.

School Sports

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much of the £750 million for school sport announced by the Prime Minister in 2000 has been *(a)* pledged and *(b)* spent. [209128]

Mr. Caborn *[holding answer 17 January 2005]:* £598.6 million of New Opportunities for PE and Sport (NOPES) funding has been committed to date for over 2,000 facilities, with £59 million drawn down by local education authorities.

80 per cent. of NOPES funding has now been committed, well ahead of schedule and we anticipate that the great majority of new facilities will be in use by spring 2006, in line with the original timetable.

Secondment

Alan Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will list the people working within her Department on secondment from the private sector, broken down by *(a)* the organisation or industry they came from and *(b)* the policy responsibilities they have been given. [208631]

Mr. Caborn: The Department for Culture, Media and Sport does not currently have any people working on secondment from the private sector.

Staff Vacancies

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much her Department spent on advertising staff vacancies in *(a)* 2002 and *(b)* 2003. [209584]

Mr. Caborn: The Department's expenditure on advertising staff vacancies in *(a)* 2002–03 was £59,922 and *(b)* 2003–04 was £51,349.

Tourism

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what percentage of the population works in the tourism industry. [208432]

Mr. Caborn: As at June 2003 there were 2.2 million people working in the tourism-related industries in Great Britain.[1] This represents nearly 8 per cent. of the total working population.

[1] Tourism employment estimates are regularly published in the National Statistics series 'Labour Market Trends'.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much revenue tourism earned in 2004. [208433]

Mr. Caborn: Figures for tourism revenue in 2004 are not yet available.

The table shows the components of tourism revenue in the United Kingdom each year up to 2003.

£ billion

	2000	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
Inbound tourists while in UK[1]	12.8	11.3	11.7	11.9
Fares to UK carriers by inbound tourists[2]	3.3	3.1	3.1	3.2
Domestic trips with overnight stay[3]	26.1	26.1	26.7	26.5
Leisure Day Visits[4]	31.8	31.5	31.3	31.8
Imputed rent for second home ownership[5]	0.90	0.91	0.92	0.94
Tourism consumption on UK trips	74.9	72.9	73.7	74.2
Outbound trips—expenditure in the UK[5]	14.7	15.4	16.4	17.6
Total tourism consumption	89.6	88.3	90.1	91.8

[1] International Passenger Survey

[2] Estimates based on National Statistics balance of payments

[3] UK Tourism Survey

[4] DCMS estimates based on Great Britain Day Visits Survey 1998 and 2002

[5] UK Tourism Satellite Account estimate for 2000 with forward projection

Provisional figures for expenditure by overseas tourists will be released on 9 February. Figures for domestic tourism expenditure are scheduled for release in May.

Waterways Museums

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on the public funding of the waterways museums at *(a)* Gloucester Docks, *(b)* Stoke Bruerne and *(c)* Ellesmere Port. [209275]

Estelle Morris: From 1999 to 2004 these museums received over £300,000 from the Designated Challenge Fund, run by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council on behalf of the Department. Central Government have only ever directly sponsored and funded a few institutions—mostly the major, long-established national museums set up by statute. Our remaining resources are committed to the Renaissance in the Regions programme, a major initiative that provides significant development funding for regional museums across England.

PRIME MINISTER

Constitutional Treaty

John Cryer: To ask the Prime Minister (1) what guidance he has issued to civil servants regarding providing public information on the constitutional treaty for the European Union; [208540]

(2) what guidance he plans to issue to the civil service on its role prior to and during the referendum on the constitutional treaty for the European Union; [208541]

(3) what guidance he plans to issue to special advisers on their role prior to and during the proposed referendum on the constitutional treaty for the European Union; [208542]

(4) what discussions he has had with the Cabinet Secretary regarding the role of the civil service prior to and during the referendum on the constitutional treaty for the European Union. [208543]

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Minister for the Cabinet Office (Mr. Miliband) today.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Agriculture and Environment Biotechnology Committee

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the future of the Agriculture and Environment Biotechnology Committee. [209570]

Mr. Morley: The report on the Organisational and Performance Review of the Agriculture and Environment Biotechnology Commission was published on 2 December. Defra and the other funding departments are considering the recommendations in the report and aim to reach a decision shortly.

AEBC members considered the review at their last meeting on 9 December. They agreed with the review's main recommendation: that the AEBC should be wound up. At the meeting Malcolm Grant said that he would put a note to the Government summarising Commission members' views on the review and the way forward. We look forward to receiving this shortly and indeed any views that individual members would wish to put to us.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has for the future of the Agriculture, Environment and Biotechnology Committee. [208805]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 17 January 2005]:* The report on the Organisational and Performance Review of the Agriculture and Environment Biotechnology Commission was published on 2 December. Defra and the other funding departments are considering the recommendations in the report and aim to reach a decision shortly.

AEBC members considered the review at their last meeting on 9 December. They agreed with the review's main recommendation: that the AEBC should be wound up. At the meeting Malcolm Grant said that he would put a note to the Government summarising Commission members' views on the review and the way forward. We look forward to receiving this shortly and indeed any views that individual members would wish to put to us.

Carbon Emissions

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the level of UK carbon emissions resulting from electrical appliances being left in standby mode in the last year for which figures are available. [208190]

Mr. Morley: The Government's Market Transformation Programme estimates that consumer electronics, home computing equipment, domestic cooking equipment and office equipment left in stand-by mode produced approximately 650,000 tonnes of carbon (c6.7TWh) in the UK in 2003.

We are also aware that there is further energy consumption, for which we do not have firm estimates at present, from washing machines and dishwashers which are switched on awaiting use or after they have completed their wash cycles; consumer electronic equipment using external power supplies (e.g. domestic portable telephones) that continue to consume energy when plugged in but not in use; and domestic personal computer equipment where the stand-by facilities are not properly enabled. Taken together, these sources of consumption may bring the overall figure to around one million tonnes of carbon.

In order to try to tackle this problem the Market Transformation Programme (www.mtprog.com) has been encouraging manufacturers to reduce both the "on" and the stand-by power consumption of household appliances through the adoption of design improvements, voluntary codes of conduct, and best practice guidelines and targets. This approach has been fairly successful in respect of televisions: an EU-wide voluntary agreement will mean that the majority of new televisions sold in the UK now consume around 1 watt of power in stand-by mode rather than the 3–8 watts consumed by older models. Discussions are now under way to extend this agreement to cover other consumer electronics.

A similar agreement for external power supplies aims to encourage new power supplies consuming around half a watt in stand-by mode compared to the present average of just over 2 watts.

In addition, the Government's initiative on sustainable procurement, announced last autumn, includes a requirement for Government Departments which purchase computers and televisions to specify low stand-by power requirements.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the national carbon dioxide reduction goal for 2020 referred to in the final paragraph of page 3 of the review of the climate change consultation paper is. [208195]

Mr. Morley: As we set out in the 2003 Energy White Paper, one of the four goals of our energy policy is to put ourselves on a path to cut the UK's carbon dioxide emissions by some 60 per cent. by about 2050, as recommended by the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution, with real progress by 2020.

We estimated then that, on the basis of our current policies, including the full impact of the Climate Change Programme, our carbon dioxide emissions might amount to some 135 MtC in 2020. The Energy White Paper said that, to be consistent with demonstrating leadership in the international process, we will aim for cuts in carbon dioxide emissions of 15–25 MtC below that by 2020, which would put us on a course to reduce our carbon dioxide emissions by some 60 per cent. by about 2050.

Climate Impacts Programmes

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the projections arrived at by the UK Climate Impacts Programmes. [208332]

Mr. Morley: In 2002, the Department published new Climate Change Scenarios in support of the UK Climate Impacts Programme (UKCIP). The scenarios were prepared by the Tyndall and Hadley Centres under contract to the Department and used the Hadley Centre's high resolution regional climate change model. They represented a significant step forward in providing a basis for assessing the potential impacts of climate change in different parts of the UK during this century.

The scenarios indicate that it is likely that:

UK annual average temperatures will rise by between 2 and 3.5 degrees Celsius by the 2080s;

High summer temperatures will become more frequent and very cold winters will become increasingly rare;

Winters will become wetter and summers may become drier everywhere;

Snowfall amounts will decrease throughout the UK;

Heavy winter precipitation will become more frequent;

Relative sea level will continue to rise around most of the UK's shoreline, with the South East expected to see the largest increases of between 26 and 86 centimetres by the 2080s;

Extreme sea levels will be experienced more frequently.

These projections are based on four alternative scenarios of future global emissions of greenhouse gases and as such capture some of the uncertainty that surrounds our ability to predict future climate. However it is recognised that projections of climate change, especially at the regional level, are also subject to modelling uncertainties which are the focus of current research. Nevertheless the UKCIP scenarios provide a scientifically robust indication of the general trends in climate that are expected and a useful basis for assessing the potential risks and opportunities of climate change.

Further information is available in the full report in the Libraries of both Houses. The reports can also be found at www.ukcip.org.uk.

Climate-based Conflict

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with the *(a)* Ministry of Defence and *(b)* Foreign and Commonwealth Office on the impact of climate-based conflict, with particular reference to Darfur. [206808]

Mr. Morley: The Department has been engaged in the preparatory work for a study on countries at risk of instability being undertaken by the Prime Minster's Strategy Unit, which identifies climate change as one of a range of threats to stability.

Dobson Photospectrerra Data

Ms Atherton: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what advice she has received from the scientific community regarding the cessation of the compilation of Dobson Photospectrerra data from Camborne; [207984]

(2) what consultation she undertook before stopping research into ozone depletion at Camborne Meteorological Office; [207985]

(3) for how many years the UK Government has collected data using the Dobson Spectrerra; [207986]

(4) what analysis has been done of the data collected by the Dobson Photospectrerra; and if she will make a statement; [208092]

(5) what representations she has received about the discontinuance of the collection at Camborne of data concerning ozone levels; [208100]

(6) what steps she is taking to collect data in the south-west of England about ozone depletion. [208101]

Mr. Morley: The Government are satisfied that the current arrangements for collecting ozone data are more cost-effective than those applying previously, and meet scientific and public information needs.

The Met Office, for the UK Government, has collected Dobson Photospectrometer data since 1957. Measurements at Camborne were taken between 1957 and 1967 and then between 1989 and 2003. In the intervening period, measurements were taken at Bracknell, near Reading. There have been continuous measurements at Lerwick since 1957.

Ozone measurements are also available from satellites and give complete coverage for the UK, although a few local measurements in an area the size of the UK are needed to calibrate the satellite data and to provide long-term data for analysing trends.

At the renewal of the monitoring contracts in 2003, bidders were asked to propose a rationalisation of both the ozone and ultra-violet radiation (UV) monitoring networks. Following an analysis of network requirements, provided by Imperial College, it was decided to move measurements of ozone from Camborne to Reading, for the following reasons:

> There was a long record of UV measurements at Reading and co-location of the ozone and UV monitoring sites in the south was deemed to be useful.
>
> Ozone measurements had been made at Bracknell, near Reading, previously.
>
> Ozone measurements were also made in Valentia, Ireland, and that would be sufficient information, together with Reading, to provide cover for south west England.

A separate formal consultation was not undertaken but was not considered necessary as the open tender process, which included key players in ozone monitoring, sought guidance on the monitoring requirement.

The Met Office expressed the view to Defra that the measurements at Camborne should have been continued; but Defra, in reviewing all of the advice it had received, concluded that on balance relocation to Reading was the best option.

The daily ozone data are analysed on a weekly basis, and the results, including those covering the south-west, are placed on a publicly accessible website (http://www.airquality.co.uk/archive/ozone/). The record at Lerwick over the last 30 years shows a decreasing trend in overall ozone levels. However, there is some indication of ozone recovery in the last 10 years at both Lerwick and Camborne. If any short-term low or high ozone events occur, further analysis is carried out to ascertain the causes. Records are sent to international data centres where they are made available for studies to identify global ozone trends.

EU Constitution

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of whether a high level of protection and improvement of the environment as required by Article I–3(3) of the proposed EU constitution has been attained by *(a)* the United Kingdom and *(b)* each other EU member state. [208250]

Mr. Morley: Article 2 of the existing Treaty establishing the European Community sets the promotion of a high level of protection and improvement of the quality of the environment as one of the tasks of the EC. Similarly, Article I–3(3) of the treaty establishing a constitution for the European Union sets working for the sustainable development of Europe as one of the objectives of the EU, with a high level of protection and improvement of the quality of the environment as one of the bases for this. The UK welcomes this. The environment is an area where considerable progress has been made by EU member states working together.

In relation to work in the UK, on 8 December 2004, Defra published its five year strategy, "Delivering the Essentials of Life". This sets out Defra's achievements, vision and plans for work over the coming years.

At EU level, the sixth Environmental Action Programme, adopted in 2002, set out priority areas for work over a 10 year period; work on more detailed thematic strategies covering key areas is in progress, and these are due to be published by the European Commission in 2005.

Assessment of the state of the environment in other member states is a matter for those states, and for relevant EU institutions such as the European Commission, European Environment Agency (EEA) and Eurostat where collating such information lies within their remit. The EEA's "Kiev report" published in April 2003 provides an in-depth report on the state of the environment in Europe. The documents referred to can be found in the Library of the House.

Government Decontamination and Recovery Service

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) on what date *(a)* it was decided to establish the Government Decontamination and Recovery Service, *(b)* the service began operations and *(c)* the services will be fully operational; [208341]

(2) what the relationship is of the Government Decontamination and Recovery Service with other Government agencies with overlapping functions; and if she will make a statement; [208342]

(3) what the command structure is of the Government Decontamination and Recovery Service; and which official from her Department heads the service; [208343]

(4) how many staff are employed in the Government Decontamination and Recovery Service, broken down by *(a)* permanent employees, *(b)* temporary staff and *(c)* contractors; [208344]

(5) what the *(a)* remit and *(b)* budget is of the Government Decontamination and Recovery Service. [208345]

Mr. Morley: As I announced on 25 March 2004, the Government are actively considering setting up a decontamination and recovery service. Progress has been made and the Government expect to make a further announcement on 25 January.

Kyoto Commitments

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what efforts the UK is making within the EU to ensure that those EU countries that are off-target with their Kyoto commitments make better progress to meet their commitments; and if she will make a statement. [207213]

Mr. Morley: Demonstrating progress towards the EU's Kyoto Protocol target of a 8 per cent. reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2012 will be a priority for the UK's presidency of the EU later this year. We are taking every opportunity to raise the issue in discussions with other member states, and stressing the importance of implementing measures to meet their commitments. We will also press for harmonisation across member states with respect to the scope of the EU Emissions Trading Scheme for Phase 2 (2008–12).

The latest emission projections from member states suggest that a combination of existing domestic policies and measures, additional policies and measures which are already in an advanced state of planning, and emission credits gained through the Kyoto Protocol's project-based mechanisms will deliver a total EU-15 emissions cut of 8.6 per cent. by 2010. We will continue to review and monitor progress towards this goal.

Model Dog Control Offences

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her timetable is for consultation on model dog control offences; who will be consulted; and if she will make a statement. [208347]

Alun Michael: We will consult all interested parties on the relevant regulations. The timing of the consultation will depend on the outcome of Parliament's consideration of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Bill and when that consideration is completed.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has to provide guidance to local authorities about *(a)* the circumstances under which dog control orders should be used and *(b)* the provision of an appeals mechanism in respect of such orders. [208348]

Alun Michael: Detailed provisions on dog control orders made under the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Bill will be set out in regulations, and we will also issue guidance to local authorities on the use of these orders.

There are no provisions in the Bill for appeal against a dog control order, as the intention of the Bill is to simplify procedures for introducing local measures on dogs, allowing controls on dogs to be decided at the local level in light of local circumstances. There will be a requirement for full local consultation before a dog control order is made, and general judicial remedies such as judicial review will continue to be available.

OP Pesticides

Mr. Tyler: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps her Department is taking to update advice to *(a)* farmers, *(b)* market gardeners and *(c)* other users of organophosphate pesticides in the light of the findings of the Department of Health's advisory committee on carcinogenicity relating to links between prostate cancer and these substances. [208165]

Alun Michael: The Advisory Committee on Pesticides (ACP) has primary responsibility for providing advice to the Government on any new evidence which may affect the risk to those who use pesticides. At its meeting on 13 January the ACP considered the Report of the Department of Health's advisory Committee on Carcinogenicity relating to the link between prostate cancer and pesticides.

The ACP concurred with that committee's view that there is some limited evidence to suggest an association between farmers/farm workers, exposure to pesticides, and increased risk of prostate cancer, but noted that this limited evidence did not prove a causal link between pesticide use and cancer. The ACP also agreed with the conclusion that the potential association between herbicide use and cancer in farmers and farm workers should be kept under review. Organophosphate pesticides were not identified in the report.

In addition, the ACP is advising that a study be put in place to look at workers involved with pesticide manufacture.

I will carefully consider the advice given.

Mr. Tyler: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she will publish the report of the review of the scientific literature on links between Parkinson's Disease and pesticide exposure (PS2601), funded by her Department. [208724]

Alun Michael: The full report by the Medical Research Council Institute for Environment and Health: Pesticides and Parkinson's Disease—a critical review (PS2601) has been completed. In line with Defra procedure the report will be published through a peer reviewed journal. Publication is anticipated by the middle of this year. A summary report can be found in the 'Research' section of the Defra website. http://www.defra.gov.uk/science/proiect_data/DocumentLibrary/PS2601/PS2601_1948 FRP.doc

Ozone

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the levels of *(a)* urban, *(b)* rural and *(c)* total concentrations of low-level ozone were in each year since 1997. [208192]

Mr. Morley: The concentrations of ground-level ozone between 1997 and the end of 2004 are given in the following tables 1 to 4. Data are provided as both annual average of maximum daily eight hour means and as annual averages, for all UK non-roadside urban, all UK rural and all UK non-roadside monitoring sites operating in the year concerned. Changes in the number of sites in the network in different years may alter the comparability of years. Data from 2004 are provisional. The raw data from all the sites underlying these tables are published on the National Air Quality Information Archive website www.airquality.co.uk as it is collected.

Table 1: Annual mean and annual average of daily maximum eight hour mean ozone concentrations for all UK non-roadside urban sites operating in the year

All UK urban (non-roadside) sites

	Annual mean (micrograms per metre cubed)			Arithmetic mean of daily maximum eight hour means (micrograms per metre cubed)		
	Average	Minimum	Maximum	Average	Minimum	Maximum
1997	30.95	19	46	45	26	61
1998	34.90	20	53	49	32	64
1999	39.20	21	55	56	36	73
2000	37.14	21	54	53	34	68
2001	36.69	23	50	52	36	66
2002	38.21	23	58	54	35	71
2003	41.35	28	58	60	42	81
2004	40.92	24	57	57	38	71

Table 2: Annual mean and annual average of daily maximum eight hour mean ozone concentrations for all UK rural sites operating in the year

All UK rural sites

	Annual mean (micrograms per metre cubed)			Arithmetic mean of daily maximum eight hour means (micrograms per metre cubed)		
	Average	Minimum	Maximum	Average	Minimum	Maximum
1997	52.79	43	64	65	58	74
1998	56.00	42	71	69	60	79
1999	58.47	46	74	73	65	83
2000	53.79	43	66	68	59	77
2001	53.64	44	64	67	55	75
2002	53.94	42	69	68	54	78
2003	59.00	49	73	72	65	84
2004	56.89	45	77	71	52	85

Table 3: Annual mean and annual average of daily maximum eight hour mean ozone concentrations for all UK non-roadside sites operating in the year

All sites (total)

	Annual mean (micrograms per metre cubed)			Arithmetic mean of daily maximum eight hour means (micrograms per metre cubed)		
	Average	Minimum	Maximum	Average	Minimum	Maximum
1997	36.72	19	64	49	17	74
1998	38.94	12	71	53	19	79
1999	42.75	13	74	59	22	83
2000	40.03	13	66	56	23	77
2001	39.49	14	64	54	23	75
2002	41.06	15	69	56	24	78
2003	44.68	16	73	62	26	84
2004	43.75	15	77	59	25	85

Table 4: Annual mean and annual average of daily maximum eight hour mean ozone concentrations for Lullington Heath a rural site

Lullington Heath

	Annual mean (micrograms per metre cubed)	Arithmetic mean of daily max eight hour running means (micrograms per metre cubed)
1997	58	74
1998	58	73
1999	62	79
2000	58	72
2001	57	72
2002	55	70
2003	63	81
2004	61	77

Recycling

David Maclean: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what targets for waste recycling she has set for *(a)* Cumbria county council, *(b)* Allerdale district, *(c)* Carlisle city council and *(d)* Eden district council. [209460]

Mr. Morley: In 2005–06, Cumbria county council has a Statutory Performance Standard requiring it to send for recycling or composting 21 per cent. of the total tonnage of household waste collected by its constituent waste collection authorities and at its civic amenity sites.

In the same year, Allerdale district council, Carlisle city council and Eden district council have Statutory Performance Standards which require them to send for recycling or composting 18, 30 and 24 per cent. respectively of household waste collected.

David Maclean: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what financial assistance her Department is making available to *(a)* Cumbria County Council, *(b)* Allerdale District, *(c)* Carlisle City Council and *(d)* Eden District Council to assist with meeting recycling targets. [209461]

Mr. Morley: The main source of funding for the above councils is through the Environmental, Protective and Cultural Services (EPCS) block of annual Government grant. It is for the local authorities to decide what proportion of the block is invested in waste management services including recycling.

In 2003–4 the Carlisle/Eden Partnership were awarded £1,155,035 from the National Waste Minimisation and Recycling Fund. In the same year Allerdale Borough Council received £424,665. Allerdale Borough Council received a further £597,116 from the fund in 2004–5.

To relieve spending pressures in the waste area authorities received the following amounts in 2004–05:

	£
Cumbria County Council:	20,866
Allerdale Borough Council:	19,367
Carlisle City Council:	39,153
Eden District Council:	13,947

In 2004–05, Cumbria County Council received 143,361 in direct consultancy support through Defra's Waste Implementation Programme to undertake a county wide waste composition analysis. In the same year, Allerdale District Council received £18,275 to review their strategic planning for waste management, and Eden District Council received £12,800 for work looking at preventing commercial waste from entering its domestic waste stream.

The Government has also announced a three-year targeted local authority Waste Performance and Efficiency Grant totalling £260 million A full list of the allocation to each authority in England in 2005–06 has been published. As part of this allocation authorities will receive the following amounts:

	£
Cumbria County Council:	210,178.14
Allerdale Borough Council:	29,375.43
Carlisle City Council:	32,344.53
Eden District Council:	15,997.07

Sewage

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much sewage was discharged into the *(a)* Severn, *(b)* Yorkshire Ouse, *(c)* Humber, *(d)* Mersey, *(e)* Aire, *(f)* Avon, *(g)* Tyne, *(h)* Trent, *(i)* Dee, *(j)* Great Ouse, *(k)* Wye, *(l)* Spey, *(m)* Nene, *(n)* Eden, *(o)* Ribble and *(p)* Tees in each month of the last four years. [208223]

Mr. Morley: The information requested is not held centrally and could not be provided without disproportionate cost.

Thames Barrier

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list the occasions on which the Thames Barrier has been closed in each of the last 10 years; and what estimate she has made of the number of occasions when it will be closed in *(a)* 2010, *(b)* 2020; *(c)* 2050 and *(d)* 2100. [208191]

Mr. Morley: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 19 April 2004, *Official Report*, columns 154–55W. The Environment Agency's estimates for future years remain as given in that answer.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Careers Service

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when the Government plan to release the Connexions End to End Review of Careers Education and Guidance; and if she will make a statement. [208815]

Margaret Hodge: The findings of the End to End Review of Careers Education and Guidance (CEG) are being used to inform the development of the Youth Green Paper, and I expect the findings to be published alongside the Green Paper.

College/School Funding Gap

Mr. Hunter: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what measures she plans to take to reduce the funding gap between the college sector and the schools sector. [208184]

Dr. Howells: Government recognises that there are differences in the funding allocated to further education colleges and school sixth forms and has taken action to address this. For the academic year 2003/04, base funding rates per qualification increased by 3 per cent. for school sixth forms and by 4.5 per cent. for further education colleges on a broadly comparable basis. In 2004/05, funding rates for colleges meeting their targets increased by 5 per cent. while those for school sixth forms rose by 4 per cent. We expect to see this trend continue in the 2005/06 academic year.

Mr. Hunter: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will revise the further education college sector's area uplift funding so that colleges in areas of lower funding in close proximity to areas of higher funding will be less disadvantaged in comparison to nearby colleges. [208186]

Dr. Howells: The area costs uplift is a feature of the Learning and Skills Council's funding methodology. As matters concerning the level and structure of the uplift relate to the LSC's operational responsibilities Mark Haysom, the LSC's Chief Executive, will write to the hon. Member providing the information requested and a copy of his reply will be placed in the House Libraries.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the cost of travel within the UK for the Department was in each year since 1997; and how much of this was spent on *(a)* hire cars, *(b)* helicopter hire, *(c)* hotel accommodation and *(e)* subsistence. [206475]

Derek Twigg: All travel and subsistence is conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Ministerial Code, Travel by Ministers and the Civil Service Management Code.

The detailed information requested for the Department is not held centrally and can be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much the Department spent on first-class travel in each year since 1997. [206560]

Derek Twigg: All travel is conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Ministerial Code, Travel by Ministers and the Civil Service Management Code.

The detailed information requested for the Department is not held centrally and can be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many overseas trips, and at what total cost, have been made by her Department in each year since 1997; and what the costs of *(a)* flights, *(b)* internal travel, *(c)* hotel accommodation and *(d)* subsistence were of each trip. [206650]

Derek Twigg: All travel and subsistence is conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Ministerial Code, Travel by Ministers and the Civil Service Management Code.

Information relating to overseas travel by Ministers is published on an annual basis. Information for the period 2 May 1997 to 31 March 2004 is available in the Library of the House. Information for the financial year 2004–05 will be published as soon as possible at the end of the current financial year.

The detailed information requested for the Department is not held centrally and can be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Telephones

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what his policy is on the use of telephones in his Department by members of staff for their own personal use for *(a)* domestic and *(b)* international calls; and if he will make a statement. [204730]

Derek Twigg: The policy on the use of telephones in the Department for Education and Skills by members of staff for their own personal use in respect of domestic calls is that only essential and genuinely urgent personal telephone calls are permitted (free of charge) providing that they are kept short. No other personal telephone calls are permitted from office telephones, other than through the use of a personal chargecard. The international dialling facility is barred and only enabled where there is a clear and justified business need.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what measures he has taken to ensure the telephones in his Department are not used by staff for making unauthorised personal calls to international numbers. [204731]

Derek Twigg: In order to ensure telephones in the Department for Education and Skills are not used by staff for making unauthorised personal calls to international numbers, international dialling is barred on the telephone system and enabled on an individual basis only where there is a clear and justified business requirement to use this facility.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the estimated cost to his Department is of unauthorised personal calls made by members of staff to *(a)* domestic and *(b)* international numbers. [204732]

Derek Twigg: In common with a number of Government Departments, The Department for Education and Skills takes a managed telephone service from OGC that is charged on the basis of each live extension that includes call charges. The Department has no visibility of call charges and therefore no costs are incurred in respect of unauthorised personal calls to domestic and international numbers.

Documents

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what her Department's policy is in relation to the storage of documents and the use of shredders; and whether this policy has been reviewed in the past 12 months. [206745]

Derek Twigg: The DfES regularly destroy records as part of proper records management policies. Overall, less than 5 per cent. of Government records contain historically significant information worth preserving—the rest are destroyed, and always have been. Paying to store outdated records which are no longer of any use, and which are not historically valuable, wastes taxpayers' money.

The DfES has an agreed contract for the collection and destruction of confidential waste in a secure manner, using staff and procedures accredited to British Security Industry Association standards, British Standards and/or European Standards as appropriate.

The Department continues to implement well established policies and procedures for the review and disposal of files in accordance with its administrative needs and the Public Records Act.

The Department has seen no reason to review its policy on shredding material during the last 12 months.

Drugs in Schools

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how many representations have been made to her Department by schools on problems of drug use *(a)* on and *(b)* outside school premises in each of the last 10 years; [209108]

(2) how many notifications of illegal drug possessions by school pupils on school premises there were in each of the last 10 years; [209110]

(3) how many needle stick injuries have been reported from discarded needles in school grounds in each of the last 10 years. [209111]

Derek Twigg: Schools are not required to notify the Department and data is not collected on numbers of illegal drug possessions by school pupils or needle stick injuries in school grounds. The Department receives representations on a range of issues relating to drugs from organisations and individuals but data is not available in the form requested. We are committed to ensuring that good quality drug education is taught in schools and that schools are supported to respond appropriately to drug issues in schools.

E-mails

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the Department's policy is in relation to the storage and deletion of e-mails; and whether this policy has been reviewed in the past 12 months. [206744]

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on her Department's policy regarding the retention of e-mails in electronic form *(a)* after and *(b)* up to 1 January 2005; and what instructions have been given regarding the deletion of e-mails prior to 1 January 2005. [206959]

Derek Twigg: E-mail messages that form part of the official record are saved for as long as business needs require and stored corporately in accordance with departmental record management procedures and the e-mail guidance available on the National Archives website at: http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/electronic records/advice/pdf/managing_emails.pdf

Electronic records (including e-mails) which need to be retained are saved into the department's formal electronic record keeping systems or into the paper filing system. Those electronic records (including e-mails) which do not need to be retained are disposed of regularly. DfES are considering the introduction of a limit on the time that e-mails may be kept outside an official record keeping system before automatic deletion.

Freedom of Information

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the publication schemes under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 prepared by public authorities for which her Department has responsibility; and if she will list the authorities which *(a)* have had and *(b)* have not prepared such schemes. [208480]

Derek Twigg: All publication schemes have to be approved by the Information Commissioner. There is a requirement that each public authority reviews its publication scheme periodically to ensure they are accurate and up to date. The DfES is reviewing its scheme to improve access and content.

The public authorities with published publication schemes for which the Secretary of State has responsibility are:

Department for Education and Skills
Adult Learning Inspectorate
British Educational Communications and Technology Agency
Engineering Construction Industry Training Board
Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service
Construction Industry Training Board
General Teaching Council
Higher Education Funding Council for England
Investors in People UK
Learning and Skills Council
National College for School Leadership
Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
Student Loans Company
Sector Skills Development Agency
Teacher Training Agency

Those public authorities currently developing their publication schemes in consultation with the Office of the Information Commissioner are:

Independent Advisory Group on Teenage Pregnancy
Office for Fair Access

Further and Higher Education

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the *(a)* higher education and *(b)* further education participation rates are for (1) the (i) poorest and (ii) richest 100 wards in England; [207712]

(2) each local authority in England, listed in descending order according to the greater disparity between the highest and lowest rates; and what the average participation rate is in each case. [207713]

Dr. Howells: The information requested has been placed in the Libraries.

Pupil Exclusions

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many exclusions there were relating to illegal drugs in each of the last 10 years in English secondary schools. [209103]

Derek Twigg: This information is not held centrally. We started to collect reasons for exclusions in relation to the summer term 2003 and these termly data collections are continuing. One category of reason for exclusion is involvement with drugs and alcohol. However, because of concerns over the reliability of the first set of data, the full data on reasons for exclusion, including those that were drug and alcohol-related, were not published in the Experimental Statistics First Release (ESR 01/2004), a copy of which is in the Library. The next Statistical First Release on exclusions will be published in May 2005.

Our guidance states that a head teacher can exclude a pupil permanently for supplying an illegal drug and that the Secretary of State would not normally expect the governing body or an appeal panel to reinstate such a pupil. Illegal drugs have no place in schools and harm children's learning, health and behaviour. We have made clear that we support head teachers and governing bodies together with local partners including the police in their efforts to tackle illegal drugs in schools.

Religious Education

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what rights parents have to withdraw their children from religious education lessons in state schools; and if she will make a statement. [209272]

Derek Twigg: Parents of all pupils in state schools have the statutory right to withdraw their children from all or any part of RE and or collective worship.

School Computers (Derby)

Mr. Laxton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much public funding has been spent on computers for schools in Derby, north in each year between 1997 and 2004. [208487]

Derek Twigg: The Department does not hold information on funding for ICT at constituency level. However, Derby north is in Derby LEA and allocations for this authority, since 1998, are detailed in 'Funding for ICT in Schools in England' which is available in the House Library.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether the contracts signed by her special advisers differ from the Model Contract for Special Advisers. [207274]

Derek Twigg: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister on 17 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 753W.

Stolen Property

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many civil servants from her Department have *(a)* faced disciplinary proceedings as a result of allegations of theft, *(b)* been charged with theft and *(c)* been dismissed following theft allegations in each year since 1997. [206407]

Derek Twigg: All breaches of the Department's expected standard of conduct are handled in accordance with the Civil Service Management Code and the Department's code of conduct. All staff are informed about standards of conduct on the Department's induction course, and can access the relevant guidance through the Staff Handbook.

My Department has dismissed one member of staff for theft since it was established in 2001. There have been no other disciplinary proceedings for theft in that time.

University Admissions

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list the meetings she and her Ministers have had with the Director of Fair Access. [208481]

Dr. Howells: I and the previous Secretary of State, Charles Clarke, have each had one brief introductory meeting with Sir Martin Harris, the Director of Fair Access, since his appointment.

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what her most recent estimate is of the cost of setting up the independent person or panel with responsibility for reviewing decisions made by the Office for Fair Access. [208505]

Dr. Howells: The Department has followed the guidance set by the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments (OCPA) for this vacancy. The estimated cost of the recruitment process, including advertising costs, is £6,000. We hope to announce the name of the independent reviewer shortly.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the latest figures are for online application to university; and what steps she has taken to evaluate consumer satisfaction with the process. [208646]

Dr. Howells: As at 11 January 2005, some 200,000 applications for higher education entry in 2005 had been registered with the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) via their online application service, 'ucasapply'. This compares with about 79,000 registrations at the same point last year. The majority of registrations (76 per cent.) were via schools. UCAS has announced that is gearing up to be able to handle over 450,000 electronic applications a year.

I understand that UCAS have arrangements in place to evaluate customer satisfaction with the online application service, and are developing additional ones. In addition to information on how to use ucasapply, schools were sent a questionnaire to gain feedback on their experience of usage. Of those schools that had used ucasapply, 71 per cent. of respondents felt they had all the information they needed, and over 56 per cent. felt that it had cut down the amount of time staff spent on administering applications compared with previous paper-based applications. Schools that have not yet used ucasapply have cited lack of time to learn how to use the online system as the main reason. UCAS has contacted those falling in this category and offered them further support.

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to her answer of 21 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1719W, on university admissions, whether she plans to publish the conclusions of her review. [208647]

Dr. Howells: As I have said previously, I intend to look at the benchmarks to see if there is any way they can be improved or better understood. I will, of course, share any outcomes from this work at the appropriate time.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Bangladesh

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much funding has been provided by his Department after the first year in relation to the commitment announced in January 2004 to spend £100 million in Bangladesh in support of primary education in that country over six years; and if he will make a statement. [208776]

Hilary Benn: The Department for International Development has provided a total of £8.845 million (US$15.852 million) in the first year of support to the Primary Education Development Programme in Bangladesh.

E-mails

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on his Department's policy regarding the retention of e-mails in electronic form *(a)* after and *(b)* up to 1 January 2005; and what instructions have been given regarding the deletion of e-mails prior to 1 January 2005. [206964]

Hilary Benn: I refer the hon. Member for Lichfield to the response given to the hon. Member for Guildford (Sue Doughty) on this subject by my hon. Friend, Gareth Thomas, on 12 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 533W.

Palestine

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assistance he has offered to the Palestinian authorities to train their Police Force; and if he will make a statement. [208750]

Hilary Benn: DFID has developed a £2 million programme of support to the Palestinian Civil Police which aims to help meet immediate operational priorities, and in parallel facilitate longer-term transformational change. Since April 2004, a senior UK police officer seconded to DFID has been working in the region as a Police Adviser and DFID has provided over 50 urgently needed police vehicles (with additional funding of £700,000) as well as some communications, computer and other police equipment. Operational support will help deliver urgently needed equipment and training that will enable the police to patrol the streets effectively and deliver better services to Palestinian people.

In the medium term the Civil Police will only maximise their effectiveness if they engage in a process of organisational change. DFID's assistance will help the Palestinians develop a policing strategy, structures and management capacity to undertake such change. From January 2005, support is being co-ordinated by a European Union Co-ordination Office for Palestinian Police Support which is headed by the seconded UK Police Adviser.

Telephone Usage

Mr. Tyler: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much revenue his Department has received from the use of non-geographic 0870 telephone numbers for the period 1 October 2003 to 30 September 2004. [205847]

Hilary Benn: DFID has no 0870 telephone numbers, and therefore does not receive any such revenue.

Tsunami Relief

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will break down UK assistance to the tsunami-hit area by *(a)* debt relief, *(b)* direct aid, *(c)* bilateral aid and *(d)* donations in kind. [208964]

Hilary Benn: In response to the tsunami disaster which followed the earthquake in South East Asia, the Department for International Development has committed £75 million towards the immediate humanitarian needs. This assistance is being channelled through United Nations agencies, the Red Cross Movement, non-governmental organisations and by DFID direct action. To date, this includes the sum of £4,665,090 for DFID donations in kind. Our total DFID bilateral aid in 2003–04 to the countries that have been affected by the tsunami was £395,689,000. These are the latest figures available. DFID does not have bilateral aid programmes in all the stricken countries: a breakdown of assistance by country is detailed as follows.

On debt relief, Sri Lanka has been added to the list of countries eligible for the UK's multilateral debt relief initiative. The UK will pay 10 per cent. of its debt service costs to the International Development Association (IDA), which amounts to approximately $5.5 million in 2005, $5.8 million in 2006 and $6.2 million in 2007. Paris Club creditors have agreed not to expect repayments from affected countries that request it until the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund have completed a full needs assessment of their reconstruction and financing requirements. It is not possible to quantify the value of any relief at this stage as the technical terms remain to be discussed with those countries that apply.

UK bilateral aid to countries affected by Asia tsunami: 2003–04

£000

	Financial aid (excluding ATP)			
	Project or sector aid	*Programme aid*	*Technical cooperation*	*Aid and trade provision*
Bangladesh	10,177	—	31,643	—
Burma	4	—	175	—
India	102,646	55,000	36,097	—
Indonesia	1	—	10,305	6,559
Kenya	1,084	—	14,081	—
Malaysia	252	—	4	—
Maldives	—	—	20	—
Seychelles	10	—	1	—
Somalia	15	—	12	—
Sri Lanka	7	—	7,390	—
Tanzania	23,451	41,250	9,401	—
Thailand	181	—	53	—

	Financial aid (excluding ATP)			
	Grants and other aid in kind	*Humanitarian assistance*[1]	*DFID Debt Relief*[2]	*Total DFID programme*
Bangladesh	14,055	—	—	55,874
Burma	2,964	578	—	3,720
India	4,384	1,399	—	199,526
Indonesia	583	—	—	17,449
Kenya	10,602	53	—	25,820
Malaysia	—	—	—	256
Maldives	179	—	—	199
Seychelles	—	—	—	12
Somalia	781	3,165	—	3,973
Sri Lanka	636	67	—	8,099
Tanzania	4,880	1,500	—	80,482
Thailand	45	—	—	279

	Other programmes		
	CDC investments	*Other*	*Total gross public expenditure*
Bangladesh	99,981	—	155,855
Burma	—	—	3,720
India	45,839	—	245,365
Indonesia	—	—	17,449
Kenya	2,881	5	28,706
Malaysia	—	—	256
Maldives	—	—	199
Seychelles	—	—	12
Somalia	—	—	3,973
Sri Lanka	1,445	—	9,544
Tanzania	82,069	—	162,551
Thailand	—	5	285

[1] Humanitarian assistance comprises food aid and other humanitarian assistance.

[2] This comprises both interest and principal foregone under Retrospective Terms Adjustment. Amounts reported are repayments which would have fallen due each year.

Note:

This is mainly non-DFID debt relief, but also includes contributions from other Government Departments to CSOs, British Council and Global Conflict Pool, and small amounts of drug related assistance funded by the Home Office and FCO.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Alcohol-related Crime

David Davis: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what local authority Best Value performance indicators in relation to alcohol-related crime *(a)* were complied in 2003–04 and *(b)* will be compiled in (i) 2004–05 and (ii) 2005–06. [209263]

Mr. Raynsford: In 2003–04, one Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI) was set in relation to alcohol related crime. BVPI 127 records the number of violent crimes per 1,000 population. This figure is further broken down to separately show acts of violence which occur in connection with a licensed premises and acts of violence committed under the influence of an intoxicating substance. The same data will be collected for 2004–05. Details of the BVPIs which will apply in 2005–06 will be announced shortly.

Central Government Funding

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much central Government funding was allocated to the London borough of Havering in *(a)* 1997, *(b)* 1999, *(c)* 2001 and *(d)* 2002. [209364]

Mr. Raynsford: The amount of central Government funding allocated to the London borough of Havering in the years specified is tabled as follows.

Government revenue funding to LB Havering

	£000
1997–98	120,663
1999–2000	137,320
2001–02	160,585
2002–03	166,805

The data are outturn figures and are as reported by the local authority. The grants included are special and specific grants inside Aggregate External Finance, revenue support grant and redistributed non-domestic rates.

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much central Government money the London borough of Havering received per citizen in 2003–04. [209435]

Mr. Raynsford: In 2002–03, the London borough of Havering received £744 of central Government revenue funding per citizen. The data are outturn figures for 2002–03 and are as reported by the local authority. The grants included are special and specific grants inside Aggregate External Finance, revenue support grant and redistributed non-domestic rates.

Outturn data are not yet available for 2003–04.

Civil Service Property

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many items of civil service property within his Department are unaccounted for, broken down by type. [205568]

Yvette Cooper: The information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Correspondence

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will obtain from the Chairman of the Audit Commission a reply to the letter sent to the Chairman on 4 November 2004 by the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to Mr. J. White. [208884]

Mr. Raynsford: The Chair of the Audit Commission has advised that, following receipt of the letter of 4 November 2004, his office had spoken to my right hon. Friend's office and agreed no response was needed in the light of a letter sent by Manchester city council to my right hon. Friend also on 4 November 2004.

If my right hon. Friend still has concerns about his constituent's case then the Audit Commission will be happy to look into it.

Council Tax

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the average cost of an appeal against council tax banding was in the last period for which figures are available. [208533]

Mr. Raynsford: The average cost of an appeal against council tax banding in 2003–04 was approximately £340 (of which £300 relates to the Valuation Office Agency and £40 relates to the Valuation Tribunal Service).

Disabled Facilities

Gregory Barker: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) what assessment has been made of the merits of abolishing the Disabled Facilities Grant means test for children in England and Wales; [207775]

(2) what representations he has received regarding the possible abolition of the disabled facilities grant means test for children in England and Wales; [207776]

(3) if he will abolish the Disabled Facilities Grant means test for children in England and Wales. [207777]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, jointly with the Department of Health and the Department for Education and Skills is undertaking a comprehensive review of the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) programme. The Review will look at the operation and outcomes of the DFG Programme and make proposals to improve its efficiency and fairness. This will include a review of the DFG means test.

A wide range of representations have been received from interested parties including MPs, local authorities and parents of disabled children. These will be considered as part of the Review which will report to Ministers in May.

A similar, but separate, review is also being undertaken by the Welsh Assembly.

Electronic Devices

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many electronic devices are owned by the Department, broken down by type. [207681]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not hold the information requested centrally and could only provide it at disproportionate cost.

All expenditure incurred by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in the purchase and procurement of services and items is made in accordance with the departmental guidance on financial procedures and propriety, based on principles set out in Government Accounting. Where possible purchases of electronic devices are made through centrally negotiated contracts.

E-mails

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on his Office's policy regarding the retention of e-mails in electronic form *(a)* after and *(b)* up to 1 January 2005; and what instructions have been given regarding the deletion of e-mails prior to 1 January 2005. [206958]

Yvette Cooper: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to the hon. Member for Guildford (Sue Doughty) on 10 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 221W.

Fire Service

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many fire and rescue authorities in England have substantially abandoned the 2-2-4 shift pattern since the introduction of the integrated risk management plans. [206063]

Mr. Raynsford: As far as the Office Deputy Prime Minister is aware, none of the draft Integrated Risk Management Plans published for consultation have moved away from the 2-2-4 shift pattern since the introduction of the Integrated Risk Management Planning system. However, a number of fire and rescue authorities are reviewing their crewing arrangements.

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many beds have been removed from fire stations in England as a result of the implementation of Integrated Risk Management Plan 1 plans. [206064]

Mr. Raynsford: A number of Fire and Rescue Authorities had proposed in their Year 1 Integrated Risk Management Plans to remove beds from certain fire stations. However, to date as far as the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is aware, none has done so.

Living Spaces Programme

Ms Oona King: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he expects to reopen the Living Spaces programme for fresh applications. [209008]

Phil Hope: Living Spaces was set up as an innovative approach to helping communities make tangible and lasting changes to their local environment. Due to the large demand from community groups for support from Living Spaces, funding for the three-year programme has been exhausted and, therefore, there are currently no plans to reopen the scheme for fresh applications. We are working across Government and elsewhere to ensure that Living Spaces, or a similar type of funding scheme, will continue in the future.

The lessons learnt from the success of Living Spaces will help to inform future policies and programmes that seek to involve local people in improving the quality of their local communities.

Local Elections

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the cost to public funds was of *(a)* producing and *(b)* mailing the manifesto booklet for the (i) 2000 and (ii) 2004 Greater London Authority elections. [207918]

Mr. Raynsford: Following late amendments made in the Other Place to the Greater London Authority Act 1999, the Government was required to provide Mayoral and Assembly candidates with free distribution of electoral material during the 2000 elections. This set a precedent for future GLA elections and the provision was therefore included in the 2004 Election Rules.

In 2000, the total cost to public funds of producing and distributing the Mayoral election booklet was £1.3 million. Of that, £850,000 was for postage.

In 2004 the Greater London Returning Officer was responsible for planning and organising the GLA election. He has indicated that the public cost of the design and printing of all election publications was £1.012 million. Postage costs came to almost £521,000.

Local Government Reform

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the timescale is for publication of further consultation papers on reform of local government. [207932]

Mr. Raynsford: Last July, the Government launched a debate on the future of local government with the publication of "The future of local government: Developing a 10 year vision". As part of this debate, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister intends to publish discussion papers on neighbourhood engagement and local leadership at the end of January. We expect to publish a further paper on the performance framework in the spring.

Mobile Phone Masts

Chris Ruane: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has to review the advice on the location of mobile phone masts near schools; and if he will make a statement. [209296]

Yvette Cooper: Mobile phone mast and base station developments near schools are subject to the normal planning regulations in place throughout England, unless exempted by the regulations set out in Part 24 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (GPDO). The planning arrangements for telecommunications developments were significantly strengthened in 2001 and include improved requirements for consulting local people about mast proposals. The changes to the GPDO were underpinned by revised guidance, set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 8, Telecommunications. The changes to the planning guidance also underlined that school governors must be consulted on all proposals for new masts on or near a school or college. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is currently considering the NRPB report on Mobile Phones and Health 2004 and will respond once we have considered them fully.

Chris Ruane: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what guidelines he has issued on consultation with *(a)* schools and *(b)* the public on the location of mobile phone masts; and how many applications have (i) conformed and (ii) failed to conform to the guidelines since their inception. [209297]

Yvette Cooper: A Code of Best Practice on Mobile Network Development has been produced to provide clear and practical advice to ensure the delivery of significantly better and more effective communication and consultation between operators, local authorities and local people. It provides more detailed advice than is contained in Planning Policy Guidance Note 8 on Telecommunications (PPG8) about how local communities and particularly schools and colleges should be consulted in relation to telecommunications developments. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has commissioned a study to assess the impact that the Code has had since its introduction, how local authorities have implemented the Code and how the public perceives its operation.

The specific information requested is not held centrally by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and could provide it only at disproportionate cost.

Chris Ruane: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many mobile phone masts in England are located within a 200 m radius of a school, broken down by local authority area; and if he will make a statement. [209298]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not hold the information requested centrally and could provide it only at a disproportionate cost.

Chris Ruane: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the impact on house prices of the erection of mobile phone masts; and if he will make a statement. [209300]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has made no assessment of the impact on house prices of the erection of mobile phone masts.

In respect of potential impacts of proposed telecommunications development on property values, PPG 1 notes that it is not for the planning system to protect the private interests of one person against the activities of another. Although in a particular case considerations of public interest may serve to protect private interests, the material question is not whether a particular development would cause financial or other loss to owners and occupiers of the neighbouring property, but whether the proposal would have a detrimental effect on the locality generally, and on amenities that ought, in the public interest, to be protected.

Glenda Jackson: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will institute an immediate review of the planning process for the siting of mobile phone masts as called for in the National Radiological Protection Board report. [208966]

Yvette Cooper: The Government have welcomed the timely review undertaken by the National Radiological Protection Board which was published on 11 January. The report made many recommendations about mobile phones and health, including two relating to planning procedures. We are studying the recommendations and will respond once we have considered them fully.

Glenda Jackson: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will revise planning procedures with regard to mobile telephone masts to enable local authorities to consider possible health implications. [208967]

Yvette Cooper: The Government are carefully considering the judgment on 13 November 2003 by the Court of Appeal in the case of "First Secretary of State *v.* T-Mobile and others" and the report entitled "Mobile Phones and Health 2004" published by the National Radiological Protection Board on 11 January which both make reference to the extent to which local planning authorities can take health concerns into account in decisions about the siting of mobile phone base stations.

MOD Land

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 15 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1119W, on MOD land, when the first audit of the arrangement will take place; and if he will make the results publicly available. [209074]

Keith Hill: There are no separate auditing arrangements planned for the framework agreement announced in November 2004 between English Partnerships and Defence Estates on surplus Defence land. The agreement will be monitored and reviewed annually as part of these organisations normal operations. Separate monitoring arrangements will be established for any project arising from the agreement.

Planning

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the average time taken to process a planning appeal by the Planning Inspectorate was in *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* the latest year for which figures are available. [207931]

Keith Hill: The average time taken to process a planning appeal in England between the 1 January and 31 December 1997 was 24.0 weeks. During this period 14,455 appeals were received.

In the period 1 January to 31 December 2004 the average time taken to process a planning appeal was 25.7 weeks. During this period 25,237 appeals were received.

Bob Russell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will give guidance to planning authorities not to determine planning applications related to earlier applications which are the subject of an ombudsman investigation; and if he will make a statement. [209267]

Keith Hill: It is for the local planning authority to consider how to deal with the planning proposals it receives, including any repeat applications, and to take appropriate advice on the facts and circumstances of individual cases where necessary. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister sees no need to issue general guidance on this point.

Right to Buy

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many applications have been submitted for right to buy for local authority dwellings in each English local authority since 1997. [207991]

Keith Hill: Annual figures on council right to buy applications from 1997–98 to 2000–01 as reported by local authorities are available from the Local Housing Statistics publication series (Tables 3a (1998–99) and 3b (1997–98) from Issue no. 128 (1998–99), Table 3 from Issue no. 129 (1999–2000) and Issue no. 130 (2000–01).

The figures for 1999–2000 to 2002–03 are available from the housing statistics section on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's internet site.

The web link for 1999–2000 to 2001–02 information is http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_control/documents/contentservertemplate/odpm_index.hcst?n = 1680&l = 4 [Housing-Housing Statistics-Publications-Local Housing Statistics-Annual Statistics].

The web link for 2002–03 information is http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_housing/documents/page/odpm_house_029535.xls [Housing-Housing Statistics-Live Tables-Social Housing Sales-Table no 648].

Social Housing

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what his estimate is of the total number of *(a)* social housing units for rent and *(b)* low cost home ownership units that will be built or acquired (i) with Housing Corporation social housing grant, (ii) with transitional local authority social housing grant and (iii) without public subsidy in 2004–05. [204926]

Keith Hill: The following table sets out the forecast number of units to be provided in 2004–05 for rent and low cost home ownership with funding from the Housing Corporation's Approved Development Programme (ADP), transitional local authority social housing grant (LASHG). It also shows the Department's current estimates of the units which could be provided without public subsidy.

	Rent	*Low cost home ownership*
ADP	16,952	10,048
LASHG	4,356	608
Without public subsidy	1,200	2,600
Total	22,508	13,256

Where schemes are joint funded with ADP and transitional LASHG these units are recorded against the ADP line.

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) what his policy is towards the findings of the Barker Review regarding the number of additional new social housing dwellings that need to be provided each year in the UK; [208388]

(2) if he will set a target for the proportion of new homes to be provided in the Sustainable Communities Plan that will be social housing. [208390]

Keith Hill: My right hon. Friends the Deputy Prime Minister and the Chancellor, in their initial response to Kate Barker's report in March 2004, accepted the case for increased investment in social housing and undertook to address this in the 2004 Spending Review.

The funding provided in the Spending Review 2004 is planned, along with efficiency improvements, to produce 75,000 social rented homes and 40,000 homes for essential public sector workers and low cost home ownership over the three years to 2007–08.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not set targets at local level. The Government believe that local authorities are best placed to carry out local housing needs assessments. The Government's policy on planning and affordable housing is clearly set out in planning policy guidance, which provides a strong framework for the provision of affordable housing and requires local authorities to undertake local housing needs assessments and formulate development plan policies to meet the community's needs for housing, including an element of affordable housing on suitable sites.

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what systems he is putting in place to monitor the delivery of planned improvements to properties transferred under *(a)* large scale voluntary transfer, *(b)* arms length management organisations and *(c)* private finance initiative schemes. [208392]

Keith Hill: The arms length management organisations (ALMO), large scale voluntary transfer (LSVT) and private finance initiatives (PFI) for housing revenue account (HRA) housing programmes are intended to achieve the Government's decent homes PSA 7 target by December 2010 and to deliver wider improvements to social housing stock and services. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will be tracking progress against the decent homes target through local authority, ALMO and registered social landlord (RSL) monitoring returns and the English house condition survey (EHCS).

In addition, each programme has its own monitoring and evaluation system to track annual progress and provide longer-term assessments of the outcomes and value for money of the different programmes. The monitoring and evaluation systems apply to LSVTs from the 2001 programme onwards, all ALMO rounds, and all PFI for housing revenue account schemes. The systems collect a range of data to track progress towards the decent homes target, delivery of promises to tenants, tenant satisfaction, delivery of housing services, and linkages to wider estate and area regeneration. Where possible, these systems are based on data that is already collected by individual schemes to reduce the burden of further data collection.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many *(a)* registered social landlord dwellings and *(b)* local authority dwellings there were in England in *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* the most recent year for which figures are available. [208649]

Keith Hill: The latest available figures are tabled as follows:

Number of dwellings in England at 31 March

Thousand

	1997	*2003*
(a) registered social landlord	985	1,621
(b) local authority	3,401	2,457

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate he has made of the amount of local authority housing stock which will be transferred in each of the next five years. [208689]

Keith Hill: All local authorities are required to complete by July 2005 an options appraisal for the delivery of decent homes within their housing stock by 2010. This process will identify the most appropriate route, which may be to pursue a housing transfer. Based on recent trends it is estimated that this may bring forward between 50,000 and 150,000 dwellings transferring annually up to 2007–08. This number should then reduce annually as decent home delivery vehicles are put in place.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the eligibility requirements of local authority tenants for the right to buy; and how the discount is calculated. [208657]

Keith Hill: The information requested has been made available in the Library of the House.

Stolen Property

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the property belonging to his Office that has *(a)* been stolen and *(b)* been reported lost in each year since 1997, broken down by type of article. [206366]

Yvette Cooper: The information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Unitary Local Government

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans the Government have to introduce unitary local government in England. [207915]

Mr. Raynsford: At present there are no plans to reorganise local government in England—the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is however aware of the debate about unitary local government that is going on and will listen carefully to this.

HEALTH

Local Improvement Finance Trust

11. **Mr. Bailey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the recent progress of the NHS local improvement finance trust (LIFT) programme. [208911]

Dr. Ladyman: There are now 51 NHS Local improvement Finance Trusts (LIFT) across the country, with four buildings open to patients in East London and Barnsley. I am pleased to report that the first LIFT building in my hon. Friend's constituency is due to open in February.

General Practitioners (Hartlepool)

12. **Iain Wright:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has to increase the recruitment and retention of general practitioners in Hartlepool. [208912]

Miss Johnson: Recruitment and retention of GPs in Hartlepool is a matter for the local Primary Care Trust. I can inform you that the PCT currently has seven vacancies for GPs. It has employed eight salaried GPs to provide capacity where it has not been possible to attract principal GPs to practices. The PCT has also been working with the County Durham and Tees Valley strategic health authority to develop international recruitment of GPs. Under the national initiatives, new GPs in Hartlepool will receive the higher rate Golden Hello payment.

Acute Hospital Services (West Cumbria)

13. **Tony Cunningham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on acute hospital services in West Cumbria. [208913]

Miss Johnson: The North Cumbria Acute Hospitals NHS Trust is currently publicly consulting upon future models of acute hospital services for the whole of North Cumbria, including West Cumbria. The local population have opportunities to comment as part of the consultation process. The model includes maintaining acute hospital services in Carlisle and West Cumbria.

Nurses

14. **Mr. Betts:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many nurses were working in the NHS on 1 January; and how many there were on 1 January 1997. [208914]

Mr. Hutton: In 1997, 318,856 nurses were employed in the NHS. In 2004, this figure had increased to 396,359, an increase of 77,500.

Primary Care Trusts

15. **Mr. Watts:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what methodology will be used for the allocation of health funding to primary care trusts after 2006. [208915]

Mr. Hutton: The weighted capitation formula will be used to determine each Primary Care Trust's (PCTs) target share of available resources. Work on the precise allocations for each PCT covering the period 2006–07 to 2007–08 is ongoing.

Mental Health

16. **Mr. Todd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what proportion of mental health patients in Derbyshire have a care plan. [208916]

Dr. Ladyman: Information on the proportion of mental health service users who have a care plan is not collected centrally. However, the Trent strategic health authority reports that all service users, of working age accepting a service from Derbyshire Mental Health Services NHS Trust, have a Care Programme Approach Care Plan.

General Practice Premises

17. **Mr. Cawsey**: To ask the Secretary of State for HealthTo ask the Secretary of State for Health how many general practice premises have been improved since 1997. [208917]

Mr. Hutton: We began collecting data on the improvement of GP premises in April 2000. The latest available figures are at September 2004 and show that 2,471 GP premises have been replaced or refurbished.

Health Needs

18. **Tony Lloyd**: To ask the Secretary of State for Health To ask the Secretary of State for Health what his policy is on the allocation of funding for health to recognise the needs of different socio-economic groups. [208918]

Mr. Hutton: A weighted capitation formula is used to determine each primary care trust's (PCTs) target share of available resources, to enable them to commission similar levels of health services for populations in similar need.

The new funding formula introduced from 2003–04 gives much greater weighting to the needs of deprived communities.

Dental Laboratories

19. **Mr. Flook**: To ask the Secretary of State for Health To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the effect of the new dental contract on dental laboratories; and if he will make a statement. [208919]

Ms Rosie Winterton: An early analysis indicated a reduction in laboratory work but did not reach any firm conclusions and we are therefore continuing to analyse the effects of PDS on dental laboratories.

Worcestershire Royal Hospital

20. **Mr. Michael Foster**: To ask the Secretary of State for Health To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent assessment he has made of activity levels at Worcestershire Royal hospital; and if he will make a statement. [208920]

Dr. Ladyman: Worcestershire Royal hospital is part of the Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust.

During 2003–04, there were 97,612 finished consultant episodes at the Trust. An increase of 0.06 per cent. on the previous year, when there were 92,091.

Mental Health Bill

22. **Mr. Amess**: To ask the Secretary of State for Health To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he plans to publish the code of practice for the draft Mental Health Bill. [208922]

Ms Rosie Winterton: We plan to publish the first draft of the Code of Practice for England when the Bill is formally introduced into Parliament.

NHS Consultants

23. **Andy King**: To ask the Secretary of State for Health To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many consultants were working in the NHS *(a)* on 1 January 2005 and *(b)* on 1 January 1997. [208923]

Mr. Hutton: The latest information on consultant numbers is as at 30 June 2004, when there were 30,171 consultants employed in the NHS. This is an increase of almost 8,700 (41 per cent.) from 21,474 in September 1997.

Intermediate Care Wards

24. **Laura Moffatt:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the effects of dedicated intermediate care wards on the recovery of patients. [208924]

Dr. Ladyman: The Department of Health, with the Medical Research Council, is funding three research projects on intermediate care costing £1.5 million. Two of the research projects are looking generally at the provision, impact and cost of intermediate care services, with a third focusing on the role of community hospitals in promoting independence. The projects will be completed in the near future and the findings will be made available on the Department of Health's research website.

"Agenda for Change"

25. **Jonathan Shaw:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the progress of implementation of "Agenda for Change in the NHS". [208925]

Mr. Hutton: Assimilation to the new pay system commenced from 1 December 2004, and around 1,000 staff were assimilated onto Agenda for Change in that month. The rate of assimilation is expected to accelerate significantly in the early months of 2005.

Antidepressants

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps his Department is taking *(a)* to encourage primary care trusts to commission alternatives to drug treatments for depression and anxiety and *(b)* to encourage general practitioners to prescribe such alternatives. [206359]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The National Service Framework for mental health contains two standards for primary care mental health designed to support commissioning and delivery of effective care and treatment, including non-drug treatments.

In addition, the Department published guidance in 2001 "Treatment choice in psychological therapies and counselling" on the effective non-drug treatments for a range of conditions, including guidance specifically designed for primary care. The Department has also more recently published "Organising and Delivering Psychological Therapies" (July 2004) to provide more of an impetus for practitioners, providers and local commissioners to review and improve the delivery of psychological therapy services. Louis Appleby's report (December 2004) "NSF MH—five years on" sets out plans for the future direction of access to psychological therapies, which the National Institute for Mental Health in England will lead on.

To encourage GPs to prescribe and support alternatives to drug treatments the NHS Plan (2000) contained recommendations concerning the commissioning of 1,000 'graduate' primary health workers to support the delivery of effective psychological interventions for common mental disorders to be appointed by December 2004. The National Institute for Mental Health for England is also supporting primary care commissioners through their primary care mental health programme, and through their programme promoting choices for service users.

Bleeding Disorders

Mr. Connarty: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what measures are being taken to raise awareness among *(a)* health care professionals and *(b)* the wider public of bleeding disorders affecting women; [208095]

(2) what steps he plans to ensure that those affected by von Willebrand disease are correctly diagnosed. [208096]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Department provides core funding to the Haemophilia Society. In November last year the Haemophilia Society held a conference for health care professionals on women's bleeding disorders to help raise awareness.

The United Kingdom haemophilia centre doctors organisation working parties have published new peer reviewed guidelines, for the treatment and diagnosis of von Willebrand disease and for rare inherited haemostatic disorders, in 2004.

Chiropody Services

Andrew Selous: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of access to chiropody services for senior citizens. [208921]

Dr. Ladyman: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave the hon. Member for Broxbourne (Dame Marion Roe) earlier today.

Community Pharmacies

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many community pharmacies in each London borough *(a)* opened and *(b)* closed in each year since 2000–01; and if he will make a statement. [207910]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Information regarding the number of community pharmacies by London borough is not collected. However, the number of community pharmacies by health authority/primary care trusts per London strategic health authority is available.

The table shows a breakdown of community pharmacy openers and closures by London SHA between 2000–01 to 2002–03.

Number

	2000–01		*2001–02*		*2002–03*	
London strategic health authority	*Openers*	*Closures*	*Openers*	*Closures*	*Openers*	*Closures*
North Central London	0	0	1	1	0	0
North East London	0	4	0	1	0	0
North West London	0	7	0	1	3	4
South East London	0	0	0	0	0	0
South West London	0	2	0	0	0	3
Totals	0	13	1	3	3	7

Cost-effective Prescribing

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether general practitioners are encouraged to let patients know if a drug they are prescribing is available more cheaply over the counter; and what rules or guidelines govern this area of practice. [208122]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Generally, we expect general practitioners to issue national health service prescriptions to meet an identified clinical need for their NHS patients. However, if an appropriate treatment is available over the counter the GP might advise a patient that the product is available directly from a pharmacist, particularly if the patient was not exempt from paying prescription charges. This would only apply to patients who are not exempt from paying prescription charges. This is a discretionary matter for the GP.

Dentists

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much funding his Department has allocated for increases in the number of NHS dentists in England by October 2005. [204984]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department has provided funding to meet the service cost of the increase in dentists. £50 million was made available to the national health service last year to address local dental access issues. £3.8 million has been committed to recruit Polish dentists. The NHS is also engaging in local recruitment activity, funded from its own baseline allocation.

Domestic Violence

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what his Department's publicity budget for domestic violence awareness is in the current year; what his Department's expenditure on domestic violence awareness was in each of the last six years; and if he will make a statement. [207902]

Miss Melanie Johnson: In the past four years, the Department has not had a dedicated budget for domestic violence awareness. However, in 2000 the Department spent £40,000 on printing "Domestic Violence (A Resource Manual for Health Care Professional". We are currently in the process of updating the manual.

Information prior to 2000–01 can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

The Department is dedicating resources to domestic violence. We have appointed a national domestic violence co-ordinator to help the Department contribute to the cross-Government agenda, and have supported both financially and administratively, the national conference on domestic violence held in October 2004.

East Sussex Hospitals Trust

Mr. Waterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many cases of hospital-acquired infections have been diagnosed in the East Sussex Hospitals Trust in the last 12 months. [208113]

Ms Rosie Winterton: There are no nationally collated data on hospital acquired infections for individual acute national health service trusts.

Incapacity Benefit

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has to introduce free prescriptions for claimants in receipt of incapacity benefit; and if he will make a statement. [208652]

Ms Rosie Winterton: We have no plans to introduce free prescriptions for claimants in receipt of incapacity benefit. It is the Department's policy to offer help with health costs based on a person's income, for example, to those receiving income support. As incapacity benefit is not income-based, it will not entitle a person to free prescriptions automatically but recipients may be entitled to help by making a claim under the national health service low income scheme.

IT Projects

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list his Department's IT projects in each year since 1997, broken down by *(a)* amount spent, *(b)* purpose, *(c)* cost of over-run and *(d)* time of over-run. [205787]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department does not hold records for information technology projects completed before the financial year 1999–2000. Details of IT projects costing £100,000 or more, completed in the financial year 1999–2000 onwards, listed by amount spent, purpose and time overrun, have been placed in the Library.

The Department's project monitoring processes do not routinely identify costs specific to time overruns. A detailed analysis of project records for relevant projects would be required to calculate these costs. This exercise would involve disproportionate cost and has not been undertaken.

Local Tobacco Alliances

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the role is of local tobacco alliances; what projects they deliver; and if he will make a statement. [208994]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Local tobacco alliances have a key role locally working alongside key partners such as trading standards, environmental health, Customs and Excise and smoking cessation co-ordinators.

Alliance projects are developed in collaboration with priorities such as addressing health inequalities, reducing people's exposure to secondhand smoke and supporting the work of the national health service stop smoking services. In future this will also include delivery of the White Paper "Choosing Health".

Medical Negligence Report

Ross Cranston: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he has taken to implement the recommendations of the report, Making Amends, by the Chief Medical Officer on medical negligence (2003). [208042]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The "Making Amends" consultation ended on 17 October 2003. The responses are being used to help further develop detailed policy proposals. An announcement will be made in due course.

Mobile Phones

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what advice he is offering to the parents of young children on their access to and use of mobile phones; and if he will make a statement. [209161]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Our advice to parents of children and young people under 16 on the use of mobile phones is set out in the leaflet "Mobile phones and Health", available on the Department of Health website http://www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/Publications/fs/en). It states "the UK Chief Medical Officers strongly advise that where children and young people do use mobile phones, they should be encouraged to:

use mobile phones for essential purposes only

keep all calls short"

The advice adds that "if parents want to avoid their children being subject to any possible risk that might be identified in the future, the way to do it is to exercise their choice not to let their children use mobile phones."

A new report from the National Radiological Protection Board issued on 11 January 2005 entitled Mobile Phones and Health 2004 (Docs of the NRPB, Volume 15, No. 5) recommends that limiting the use of mobile phones by children remains an appropriate precautionary measure. Copies of the report have been placed in the Library and are available on the NRPB website www.nrpb.org.

MRSA

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people have suffered long-term illness as a result of contracting MRSA infections in each of the last 10 years. [208810]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 17 January 2005]:* This information is not held centrally, and cannot be obtained without incurring disproportionate costs.

Neuro-radiologists

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the NHS capacity is of specialist neuro-radiologists. [208849]

Mr. Hutton: The Department does not collect data at sub-specialty level. Neuro-radiology is a sub-specialty of clinical radiology.

As at June 2004, there were 1,859 consultant clinical radiologists, an increase of 417 or 29 per cent. since September 1997. The number of staff within the registrar group has also increased by 290 or 56 per cent. between September 1997 and September 2003.

These increases will increase the pool from which specialist neuro-radiologists may be drawn.

Overseas Recruitment

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how his Department assesses whether or not a country has a surplus of a particular healthcare profession when considering overseas recruitment. [209038]

Mr. Hutton: We have close relationships with the British embassies with whom we liaise before considering international recruitment. The Department has a number of Government-to-Government agreements with countries who have indicated they are happy for us to work with them to internationally recruit healthcare staff and is committed to an ethical approach to international recruitment.

Prostate Cancer

Mr. Todd: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he is taking to reduce the prevalence of prostate cancer; and if he will make a statement. [204481]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Experts do not know the underlying cause of prostate cancer. We do know that the largest risk factor is age, with family history, ethnicity, diet and some occupational factors also playing a role. There has also been an increase in the number of prostate cancer being detected. Experts do not know if this is due to an increased risk of prostate cancer or to an increase in testing for prostate cancer. The lengthening of life expectancy may also have a role in this increase.

We do know that prostate cancers can be broken down into slow growing, non-aggressive and fast growing, aggressive types. The vast majority of prostate cancers are slow growing and will not cause any harm to the man in his lifetime. The fast growing account for approximately 20 per cent. of prostate cancers and if left untreated will cause harm.

The dilemma has been that we do not know how to distinguish between the fast and slow growing types. That is why we promised to spend £4.2 million on research into prostate cancer by 2003–4, which was achieved. This was part of the NHS prostate cancer programme, published in September 2000. In addition to enhancing research into prostate cancer, the Programme also aimed to improve the early detection of prostate cancer and to improve treatment and care for patients with prostate cancer.

Good progress has been made, and is reflected in the report 'Making progress on prostate cancer', published in November 2004. A copy is available in the Library.

We have also set up the prostate cancer advisory group (PCAG), chaired by Professor Mike Richards, the national cancer director. The overall remit of PCAG is to facilitate collaboration between the Department and patient and professional groups. PCAG is taking forward work on the pubic awareness of prostate cancer, information for prostate cancer patients, improving the treatment of prostate cancer, and developing a national prostate cancer website.

Recovered NHS Costs

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he is taking to recover a greater proportion of NHS costs from those responsible for *(a)* road accidents, *(b)* accidents at work and *(c)* other accidents; and if he will make a statement. [207947]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Under the provisions contained in the Road Traffic (NHS Charges) Act 1999, national health service hospitals can recover costs for treating those injured in road traffic accidents who receive personal injury compensation. The scheme recovers around £105 million per year, which is paid directly to the hospitals that have provided treatment.

Part three of the Health and Social Care (Community Health and Standards) Act 2003 contains the legislative framework for expanding the scheme to include recovery of NHS hospital and ambulance services costs in all cases where personal injury compensation is paid. The Department has recently consulted on the draft regulations that will govern the operation of the expanded scheme. Ministers are currently considering the outcome of this consultation, which closed on 17 December 2004.

Regional Tobacco Control Managers

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to his answer of 30 November 2004, *Official Report,* column 111W, on regional tobacco control managers, what expenditure has been allocated to regional tobacco control managers since May 2003 for the funding of local tobacco alliances. [208963]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Amounts allocated to each Government Office for the Region (GOR) for tobacco control and funding of alliance work are set out in the following table.

GOR	2003–04	2004–05
North East	194,000	194,000
Yorkshire and Humber	218,000	217,000
North West	242,000	242,000
West Midlands	221,000	221,000
East Midlands	206,000	206,000
Eastern	217,000	217,000
South East	241,000	241,000
South West	214,000	214,000
London	247,000	248,000
Total	2,000,000	2,000,000

Supermarket Meat (Salt)

Clive Efford: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the health implications of the adding of salt to meat by supermarkets to increase weight; and what representations he has made to supermarkets regarding this practice. [207217]

Miss Melanie Johnson: A high intake of salt in the diet is linked to an increased risk of heart disease and stroke. The Food Standards Agency has held discussions with the British Retail Consortium and others on the practice of adding salt to meat and meat products and the importance of clear labelling. In conjunction with the agency, I have also held discussions with individual supermarket companies regarding the salt content of processed foods and the need for reductions across product categories.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Child Support Agency

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what his timetable for transferring the live caseload of the Northern Ireland Child Support Agency to the new Child Support Scheme is. [208570]

Mr. Spellar: In line with the Child Support Agency in Great Britain, the Northern Ireland Child Support Agency has been processing new applications using the new computer system and the new legislation since March 2003.

The introduction of the new computer system has not been without its problems. Therefore, existing cases will be transferred to the new scheme only when the Minister for the Department of Work and Pensions is satisfied that the new computer system is working well. No decision has been made as to when this will happen.

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the performance of *(a)* the Eastern Business Unit and *(b)* the Northern Ireland operations of the Northern Ireland Child Support Agency during 2004–05 in securing maintenance on behalf of children. [208572]

Mr. Spellar: The following information is provided in respect of the performance of Eastern Business Unit for 2004–05:

> Eastern Business Unit have cleared around 22,000 cases of which 13,000 have resulted in calculation of maintenance.
>
> Up to the end of December 2004 around 8,500 first payments have been received from non-resident parents and around 4,000 payments of child maintenance premium.
>
> Up to the end of December 2004 Eastern Business Unit had collected £10.7 million in maintenance.

The following information is provided in respect of performance of the Northern Ireland Child Support Agency for 2004–05:

> The Northern Ireland Agency have cleared around 3,500 cases of which 1,800 have resulted in calculation of maintenance.
>
> Up to the end of December 2004 around 1,500 first payments have been received from non-resident parents and around 1,000 payments of child maintenance premium.
>
> Up to the end of December 2004 the Northern Ireland Agency had collected £1.4 million in maintenance.

Children's Fund

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much extra funding has been provided to the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for 2005–08 to allow for the mainstreaming of services funded under the Children's Fund. [208616]

Angela Smith: Children and families remain a priority for Government. All projects funded under the current three-year Children's Fund cycle will receive their full allocation from existing Children's Fund monies. No resources have been specifically provided for 2005–08 to mainstream the services currently provided by existing Children's Fund projects when this funding cycle is complete.

The Budget settlement for 2005–08 has allocated some £15 million over the period for a capital Modernisation Fund. This will be administered by DSD and Children's organisations will be able to apply for support from this fund.

Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Bill

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will extend the provision of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Bill to Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement. [209186]

Angela Smith: There are no plans to extend directly the provisions of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Bill to Northern Ireland, principally because there are significant differences in the existing legislative base and the powers of central and local government in Northern Ireland. However, I will wish to consider whether similar legislative proposals should be brought forward for Northern Ireland.

Disabled Facilities

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment has been made of the effectiveness of abolishing the Disabled Facilities Grant means test for children in Northern Ireland. [207774]

Mr. Spellar: The abolition of the Disabled Facilities Grants means test for parents of children with disabilities came into effect from 16 February 2004 and during the first 9 months, to October 2004, 49 applications for grant-aid were received from parents with disabled children. The Housing Executive estimates that annually prior to the amendment 25–30 such applications would have been made and, when the changes have been in operation for a full year, it intends to carryout an assessment to determine how many of the applicants would previously have had to make a contribution.

Driver and Vehicle Licensing

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average unit cost is to Driver and Vehicle Licensing Northern Ireland of processing an application for *(a)* a driver's licence, *(b)* a vehicle licence, *(c)* a taxi licence and *(d)* a road freight licence; what the comparable figures were for the last four financial years; and if he will make a statement. [208581]

Angela Smith: The information requested is as follows. My reply to question 208583 given today, sets out the plans to review current fee levels.

Average unit cost (£)

	2003–04	*2002–03*	*2001–02*	*2000–01*
Driver licensing	15.89	15.69	14.36	16.20
Vehicle relicensing[1]	3.26	3.07	2.95	2.58
Taxi driver and vehicle licensing	39.15	47.87	42.94	[2]—
Road freight and road service licensing	46.10	48.25	48.44	[2]—

[1] This unit cost excludes first licence costs which are included as part of the cost of the first registration transaction.

[2] Driver and Vehicle Licensing Northern Ireland took over financial responsibility for taxi, road freight and road service licensing in April 2001.

All of the above are calculated on full costs with the exception of vehicle relicensing which is on a cash basis only.

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what action he has taken to reduce and eliminate the financial deficit on processing licences by Driver and Vehicle Licensing Northern Ireland. [208582]

Angela Smith: Due to a revised method of funding introduced in 2004, Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) now leads on drivers fees for the whole of the UK. DVLA will address the deficit on DVLNI's driver fees account through the payment of a subsidy.

In order to address the deficit in taxi licensing operations, the fee for taxi vehicle licensing increased on 1 November 2004. Taxi driver licensing fees are currently under review.

For road freight and road service licensing a fees review is planned for 2005–06.

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to change the levels of licensing fees currently charged by Driver and Vehicle Licensing Northern Ireland. [208583]

Angela Smith: Driver and Vehicle Licensing Northern Ireland has fees for driver licences, taxi vehicle licences, taxi driver licences, road freight licences and road service licences.

Due to a revised method of funding introduced in 2004, Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) now leads on drivers fees for the whole of the UK. DVLA has issued a public consultation on proposed changes to driver fees. If agreed these revised fees would apply UK wide.

Taxi licence fees were increased in November 2004. A further review of taxi driver licence fees is underway.

Road freight and road service fees will be reviewed in 2005–06.

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what his planning estimate is of the expected income of Driving and Vehicle Licensing Northern Ireland in *(a)* 2004–05, *(b)* 2005–06, *(c)* 2006–07 and *(d)* 2007–08 from (i) driver licensing fees, (ii) vehicle licensing fees, (iii) taxi licensing fees and (iv) road freight licensing fees. [208584]

Angela Smith: The information is as follows.

DVLNI forecast income

£000

Licensing fees	*2004–05*	*2005–06*	*2006–07*	*2007–08*
Driver	2,400	3,926	3,765	3,423
Vehicle	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—
Taxi	450	700	700	700
Road freight and road service	400	400	400	400

[1] Driver and Vehicle Licensing Northern Ireland (DVLNI) acts as agents of the Secretary of State for Transport in the collection of vehicle excise duty (VED) and related fees. The income from VED and related activities does not form part of DVLNI income and is forecasted and accounted for by DVLA, an agency within the Department for Transport.

Note:

All forecast fee income is based on current fee levels.

Eating Disorders

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what funding has been set aside for establishing eating disorders services in the Province. [208812]

Angela Smith: £1 million has been secured for 2004–05 to develop community-based specialist eating disorders teams within each board area, which will be managed within an appropriate 'regional care network'.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many patients from Northern Ireland with eating disorders have required treatment outside the Province in each of the last five years. [208813]

Angela Smith: The number of patients from Northern Ireland with eating disorders who have had treatment outside the Province is detailed in the following table.

Financial year	*Number of patients from Northern Ireland who received treatment outside the Province*
2003–04	20
2002–03	12
2001–02	12
2000–01[1]	4
1999–2000[1]	6

[1] Information for Northern Health and Social Services Board is not available for 2000–01 and 1999–2000 and is therefore excluded from these figures.

Note:

Figures refer to those residents of Northern Ireland with eating disorders who have received treatment outside the Province.

Source:

Health and Social Services Boards

Environmental Protection

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will set up an Environmental Protection Agency for Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement. [209212]

Angela Smith: The main environmental functions in Northern Ireland are delivered by the Environment and Heritage Service (EHS), an executive agency within the Department of the Environment. EHS was established in 1996 following consideration by Government of the options available.

In November 2004, a coalition of NGOs, following a public consultation exercise which they had carried out, recommended to me that an independent inquiry be set out; this inquiry would look at, among other things, the arguments for establishing an Environment Protection Agency in Northern Ireland which would carry out the functions which currently lie with EHS.

I am considering, together with my ministerial colleagues, how best to respond to this recommendation, bearing in mind wider political developments.

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland which statutory agency provides a *(a)* pollution and *(b)* environmental damage hotline in Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement. [209603]

Angela Smith: To encourage the reporting of pollution incidents in Northern Ireland, Environment and Heritage Service (EHS), an executive agency of the Department of the Environment, operates a freefone pollution response system that is available to the public at all times. During office hours, all calls made to the freefone water pollution hotline number (0800 80 70 60) are directed to an operations room in Belfast, where the incident is assessed and passed to the relevant field staff for investigation and relevant action. Outside office hours, all calls are directed to an Environment Agency communications centre, which then tasks the on-call duty emergency pollution officer in Northern Ireland to respond.

To date a hotline dealing with reports of other environmental damage has not been established in Northern Ireland. However, in the light of recent events, the need to extend emergency reports arrangements has been identified and a system for reporting damage to protected areas is currently being devised. It is hoped to have new arrangements in place in the near future following which they will be fully publicised.

Health Service Employees

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many health service employees were suspended from work in the Province in each of the last five years; what the average time off work of such individuals was; and what total costs were incurred as a result of such suspensions. [205970]

Angela Smith: This information is not held centrally and can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

HIV

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many individuals were diagnosed with HIV in Northern Ireland in 2004. [208814]

Angela Smith: The most recent figures available indicate a total of 31 new first-UK diagnoses of HIV in Northern Ireland in 2004 (until 30 September 2004). Figures for the final quarter of the year are not yet available.

This figure is provisional and is liable to change as further reports for this period are received.

Junior Doctors

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether fluid management is taught in induction training for all junior doctors who commence posts in paediatric medicine in the Province. [202047]

Angela Smith: The topic of fluid management is included as part of the induction process for junior doctors who commence posts in paediatric units.

Learndirect

Mr. Trimble: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment has been made of the effectiveness of *(a)* Learndirect, *(b)* Enterprise Ulster and *(c)* Worktrack. [200884]

Mr. Gardiner: The answer is as follows:

(a) Learndirect

In November 2003 the Department for Employment and Learning commissioned a review of its relationship with the University for Industry (UfI)/learndirect. The report, presented in May 2004, identified a number of positive findings; for example, that UfI/learndirect supported the widening access agenda. However, the review also identified several areas of major concern including poor support for learner tracking or progression, and a decrease in 'on-line' learning from 80 per cent. in 1999 to 20 per cent. in 2003–04.

(b) Enterprise Ulster (EU)

A review of Enterprise Ulster commenced in September 2004 focusing on Enterprise Ulster's role and performance. The draft report is due to be presented to the Department in December.

(c) Worktrack

An evaluation of Worktrack was completed in May 2002, which concluded that, with some modifications there was a continuing need for the programme, at that time. Since then, the economic climate has improved, unemployment is at a very low level and there are more job opportunities. The programme is therefore considered to have a lower priority than other competing demands. The costs of an employment placement under Worktrack are also high. There is other provision available to assist people into work and significant resources available to increase skills through higher and further education.

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much has been allocated from public funds on learndirect in *(a)* North Belfast and *(b)* Northern Ireland in each year since 2000. [200904]

Mr. Gardiner: The Department for Employment and Learning allocated funding as follows for learndirect in North Belfast since 2000:

	£
2000–01	75,000
2001–02	180,000
2002–03	132,000
2003–04	95,000

The total funding claimed by centres in Northern Ireland since 2000 are:

	£ million
2000–01	1.5
2001–02	1.5
2002–03	3.0
2003–04	3.0

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people have benefited from Learndirect in *(a)* North Belfast and *(b)* Northern Ireland. [200905]

Mr. Gardiner: Since the introduction of Learndirect in March 2000, 43,544 people have undertaken learning through the network of Learndirect centres in Northern Ireland this includes 2,394 learners in centres in North Belfast.

New Deal

Mr. Hume: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what percentage of people in *(a)* Northern Ireland and *(b)* Foyle constituency entered paid employment within six months of completing each New Deal and Worktrack programme in the last 12 months for which figures are available. [205702]

Mr. Gardiner: The percentage of people in *(a)* Northern Ireland and *(b)* Foyle Consistency entering paid employment within six months of leaving the two main New Deals and the Worktrack programme are as follows.

Participants moving into employment (April 2003-March 2004) within six months of leaving the programme

Programme	*All leavers*	*Into employment*	*Percentage into employment*
(a) Northern Ireland			
New Deal 18 to 24	8032	2214	28
New Deal 25 +	6946	1348	19
Worktrack	2337	581	25
(b) Foyle			
New Deal 18 to 24	1124	242	22
New Deal 25 +	711	97	14
Worktrack	261	21	8

Note:
Leavers include those who leave at any stage of the New Deal programme.

Occupational Therapy

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps are being taken to reduce the Occupational Therapy Assessment waiting list in the Newry and Mourne health trust area. [208416]

Angela Smith: Newry and Mourne health and social services trust has advised that waiting times for occupational therapy assessments have been affected by difficulties in filling vacancies in the service. Action is being taken to overcome these. In addition, an Activity of Daily Living (ADL) clinic has been set up and this has already made an impact on the waiting list. For those unable to travel to the clinic, domiciliary visits are being arranged in the near future to assess their needs.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he will reply to the question tabled by the hon. Member for Birkenhead on 16 December 2004, reference 206617. [209467]

Mr. Pearson: I replied to my hon. Friend's question on 17 January 2005.

Private Surgery

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what percentage of patients in Northern Ireland waiting for *(a)* hip replacement surgery, *(b)* knee replacement surgery and *(c)* other surgery went on to have the operation carried out privately in each of the past five years, broken down by local health board area. [208288]

Angela Smith: The information requested is not available.

School Absence

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he expects to be able to publish school statistics that distinguish between authorised and unauthorised absence in Northern Ireland. [208567]

Mr. Gardiner: Authorised and unauthorised absence data were collected for the first time from post-primary schools in October 2004. These data are currently being verified with each school, as part of a quality assurance process to ensure consistency of recording across all schools. I expect to be able to release figures by early autumn 2005.

I anticipate that figures for primary schools will be available by summer 2007.

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what analysis the Government have made of the prevalence of unauthorised absence from school among *(a)* different types of school in Northern Ireland, *(b)* Catholic children and *(c)* Protestant children, respectively. [208579]

Mr. Gardiner: Figures on unauthorised absence are not yet available.

Septic Tanks

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to regulate the level of charges for the emptying of septic tanks in Northern Ireland after April 2006; [208599]

(2) what plans he has to encourage competition in the provision of emptying services for septic tanks in Northern Ireland after April 2006. [208613]

Mr. Spellar: New legislation is being developed to implement the agenda for reform of water and sewerage services in Northern Ireland. The legislation will establish the duties and responsibilities for the proposed Government owned company, and the desludging of septic tanks is one of the many issues under consideration. It is anticipated that consultation on this draft legislation will begin during the first half of 2005.

Social Services Funding

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what criteria the Department for Health, Social Services and Public Safety uses to set priorities in relation to *(a)* children in need, *(b)* family policy and *(c)* child protection for the Budget round for 2005–08; and what discussions it has had with key stakeholders in (i) boards, (ii) trusts and (iii) the voluntary sector. [205026]

Angela Smith: Current bids in the area of children in need, family policy and child protection have been based on wider government policy. Extensive discussions have taken place with Board and Trusts Chief Executives and Directors of Finance and Planning as to the impact of the draft Budget proposals on the provision of Health and Social Services in 2005–08. These discussions have identified a potential way forward to ensure the continued delivery of existing services and ensure that reform and modernisation takes place across the entire HPSS, to improve services.

Voluntary Organisations have contributed to Budget 2004 through the OFMDFM/DFP consultation process but formal discussions have not taken place between the Department and these organisations.

Strangford Lough

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the ploughing of the intertidal mudflats at Strangford Lough over the Christmas and new year period; and what assessment he has made of the impact of that activity on the Lough's ecosystem. [209208]

Angela Smith: On Tuesday 28 December 2004 and Monday 3 January 2005, several hectares of the intertidal mudflats at Strangford Lough were ploughed by agricultural tractors. The Environment and Heritage Service of the Department of the Environment was informed of the damage on Monday 3 January 2005 and the damage was subsequently, and continues to be, investigated by its staff.

The ploughing activity and the resulting damage covered an extensive area of the shore. Furrows which had obviously been washed by several tides and two areas of completely fresh ploughing, within the zone in which eel grass (Zostera) grows, were clearly visible. Consequently the Department commissioned an urgent scientific assessment of the damage. This will assist the Department in deciding what further action needs to be taken including whether the matter should be referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions.

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what payments are made to the National Trust to provide a warden and other related services in and around Strangford Lough; what services the National Trust undertake to provide in return with particular reference to *(a)* personnel and *(b)* equipment; and if he will make a statement. [209210]

Angela Smith: The Environment and Heritage Service currently provides the National Trust with £72,650 per annum to support its Strangford Lough Wildlife Scheme. This contributes to the cost of four wardening staff. It also contributes to overheads, transport, machinery, materials, volunteer expenses and administration. Site integrity monitoring, co-ordination of biological monitoring and practical management to maintain and enhance species and habitats all form part of the National Trust's work. In addition the National Trust provides public access, educational programmes and interpretion about the Lough and its wildlife.

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what action *(a)* he and *(b)* other public bodies for which he is responsible propose to take in respect of the ploughing of the intertidal mudflats at Strangford Lough over the Christmas and new year period; and if he will make a statement. [209211]

Angela Smith: The Environment and Heritage Service is currently investigating the circumstances surrounding the ploughing of the intertidal mudflats at Strangford Lough over the Christmas and new year period. An urgent scientific assessment of the damage has been commissioned. This will assist the Department in deciding what further action needs to be taken including whether the matter should be referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions.

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will take steps to ensure that signs in and around Strangford Lough indicate those areas designated as areas of special scientific interest; and if he will make a statement. [209602]

Angela Smith: As part of the investigation into the circumstances surrounding the recent damage caused to Strangford Lough mudflats, the Department is considering how best to strengthen public understanding of the international importance of the Strangford Lough area for nature conservation. There is already a set of modern interpretation boards in place round the Lough. Modifications of these, and additional signs, will both be considered.

Sure Start

David Burnside: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps have been taken to ensure that the restructured Sure Start project in north Belfast incorporates best practice from the Home Start model in using volunteers to support families. [208880]

Angela Smith: One of the core services to be delivered through Sure Start is home visiting but how that service is provided in a restructured project will be determined largely by the findings of the community consultation exercise carried out by the project in relation to the needs of local parents and children aged 0–3.

David Burnside: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he has taken to ensure that a multi-agency approach in service delivery is central to the proposed new Sure Start model. [208881]

Angela Smith: The Department remains fully committed to the principle of multi-agency partnership within Sure Start. It is important that the composition of any Sure Start project reflects a wide range of expertise and input from all sectors in the planning and managing of its services.

Titanic Quarter

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he expects a management plan for the development of the Titanic Quarter to be ready for consultation; and what consultation will be undertaken prior to the approval of such a management plan. [209123]

Mr. Spellar: Titanic Quarter Ltd. is currently preparing a masterplan, in conjunction with Belfast Harbour Commissioners, for the development of the Titanic Quarter site and has consulted interested parties, including Belfast city council, the Department for Regional Development and Planning Service. The masterplan is being developed within the context of the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan, and individual development proposals will be subject to consultation in accordance with the normal statutory planning process. I understand that the masterplan will be available shortly; the timing is a matter for Titanic Quarter Ltd.

Transitional Employment Scheme

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment has been made of the Transitional Employment Scheme; what plans the Government has to introduce these schemes on a permanent basis; and if he will make a statement. [202884]

Mr. Gardiner: The Department for Employment and Learning introduced the Transitional Employment Programme (TEP) in October 2003, on a pilot basis, as part of Targeted Initiatives in a small number of areas chosen because of their higher than average incidence of long term unemployment and social deprivation. The Department plans to commission an interim evaluation of the programme early in 2005–06 with a final evaluation to be carried out in 2006–07 financial year. Decisions about the future of TEP will be taken after full consideration of a final report.

University Finance

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much money has been allocated to *(a)* Queen's University and *(b)* the University of Ulster to encourage access and participation in each of the last three years. [209972]

Mr. Gardiner: Over the last three academic years, the Department for Employment and Learning has allocated funding to Queen's University, Belfast (QUB) and the University of Ulster (UU) through a range of specific funding streams aimed at widening access and participation. The amounts allocated under each funding stream are set out in the following table.

£

	Academic years					
	2001–02		*2002–03*		*2003–04*	
	QUB	*UU*	*QUB*	*UU*	*QUB*	*UU*
Additional funded places	1,519,98	1,773,71	854,238	769,638	707,348	513,060
Premium for students from disadvantaged backgrounds	381,854	458,146	518,472	621,528	443,460	696,540
Premium for students with disabilities	43,664	157,863	91,826	105,298	99,161	181,728
Widening Participation special initiative	181,740	57,286	63,930	92,277	54,810	4,472
Special initiative to improve provision for students with disabilities	42,221	42,155	41,748	19,101	27,995	34,028
Foundation Degree development costs	75,000	75,000				
Disability access capital	800,001	956,038	500,000	450,000	2,617,79	1,223,25

Veterinary Medicines

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the recent seizure by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety of unauthorised and counterfeit veterinary medicines. [208308]

Angela Smith: During 2004 the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety was involved in a lengthy investigation into the illegal distribution and sale of unlicensed veterinary medicinal products. This investigation, undertaken with the Police Service of Northern Ireland, uncovered substantial evidence of an illegal manufacturing operation of these unlicensed medicines and also of a counterfeit product.

The products uncovered were mainly antibiotic preparations intended for food-producing animals. Their unauthorised use could pose a significant threat to human health through unacceptable levels of drug residues in food, and the potential for the growth of microbial resistance to essential human medicines. A file on this has now been passed for consideration to the Director of Public Prosecutions for Northern Ireland.

Victims Groups

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what sums have been given to each victims' group in the Province in each year since April 1998. [202584]

Angela Smith: Records show that funding detailed in the table as follows has been allocated to organisations involved in providing support for victims between April 1998 and March 2004. A year by year breakdown of these figures for each group is not available and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

In addition to the amounts shown, victims' groups may also apply for funding from any programme or scheme, such as the District Council Community Relations Programme or European Union funding through the Local Strategy Partnerships, for which they can satisfy the relevant eligibility criteria.

Victims' organisation	*Amount allocated (£)*
123 House	127,767
Aisling Centre	122,060
Alanna Consultancy	1,790
An Crann	63,500
Ardoyne Commemoration	9,800
Armagh Voluntary Welfare Group	5,000
Ashton Community Trust	1,327,201
Association for Family Therapy NI	6,100
Ballybone, Belfast	2,100
Ballymoney District Partnership (Victims)	16,000
Ballymurphy Centre	226,232
Bannside Community Group	5,000
Barnardo's	70,050
Base 2	25,375
Befriending and Counselling	4,397
Belfast Cognitive Therapy Centre	54,775
Breaking the Silence	4,998
Community Action for Locally Managed Stress (CALMS)	493,159
Centre for Creative Energy, Londonderry	1,310
Claudy	9,123
County Tyrone Frontier Relief Fund	2,000
Coleraine/Ballymoney UDR	118,060
Colleague Support Group	3,100
Columba Community	123,343
Combat Stress	4,000
Community Council	2,240
Community Foundation for Northern Ireland	10,000
Community Relations Council	38,357
Conflict Trauma Resource Centre	73,165
Contact Youth	71,215
Conway Education Centre	2,500
Cookstown Colleague Support	2,165
Corpus Christi Services	387,913
Corrymeela Community	7,500
Cost of the Troubles Study	97,251
CRUSE (Foyle)	35,000
CRUSE Bereavement (NI)	74,915
CRUSE Bereavement Care (Belfast)	28,000
CRUSE (Causeway)	2,500
Cumann Tar Abhaile	22,171
Cunamh	415,688
Dairy Farm Jobclub	102,410
Democratic Dialogue	7,485
Derry and Raphoe Action	61,000
Derry City Council	2,500
Derry Well Women	62,356
Disabled Police Officers Association (DPOA)	161,447
Divis Centre	1,005
Eastern Health & Social Services Board Trauma Advisory Panel	99,590
Families of the Displaced, Dispersed and Disappeared (FODDD)	117,836
Families Achieving Change Together (FACT)	431,882
Families Acting for Innocent Relatives (FAIR)	553,165
Families for Truth and Justice	800
Family Trauma Centre	704,062
Fermanagh College	69,600
Fermanagh South Tyrone Terrorist Victims Association	96,738
Firinne	248,078
Friends of WAVE	2,304
Give Innocent Victims Equality (GIVE)	5,200
Glencree LIVE Programme—The Restorick Group	750
Greater Belfast Community Network	96,710
Greater Twinbrook and Poleglass Community Forum	10,000
Healing Through Remembering	10,000
Help and Advice with Victims Every Need (HAVEN)	114,687
Holy Trinity	130,787
Holywell Trust	16,329
Homes United by Ruthless Terrorism (HURT)	151,100
HOPE	500
Innocence, Truth and Justice	980
Institute for Counselling and Personal Development (ICPD)	579,552
Interact	5,000
Interchurch Group on Faith and Politics	600
Irish Peace Institute	6,000
Koram Centre	97,184
Lenadoon Community Counselling Project	216,409
Lifeline	14,000
Lifeways Psychotherapy and Counselling Centre	252,211
Lisburn Prisoners Support Project	111,349
Loughgall Truth and Justice Campaign	7,200
Lower North Belfast Community Group	2,000
Make Your Mark	57,838
Mid Ulster Survivors Trust	1,000
Mourne Action for Survivors of Terrorism (MAST)	36,225
New Life Counselling Service	284,561
Nexus Institute	22,392
NI Association for Mental Health	95,824
NI Memorial Fund	6,926,578
NI Music Therapy Trust	29,284
NI Prison Service	600
NICRA	1,000
North and West Belfast Trust	20,000
Northern Health & Social Services Board Trauma Advisory Panel	101,500
NI Centre for Trauma and Transformation (NICTT)	1,500,000
NOVA	320,489
Omagh Independent Advice Services	31,657
Omagh Support and Self Help Group	17,740
Passionist Youth	94,800
Pat Finucane Centre	10,376
Police Rehabilitation and Retraining Trust	20,000
Positive Action	91,218
Prison Service Trust	64,160
Regimental Association UDR	63,839
Relatives For Justice	778,497
Royal National Institute for the Deaf (RNID)	280,787
Rural Network	2,000
Seeds of Hope	2,500
Shankill Stress and Trauma Group	463,596
Sligo Presbyterian	6,000
South Down Action for Healing Wounds (SDAHW)	184,973
South East Fermanagh Foundation	92,220
South Tyrone Empowerment Programme	9,995
South West Community Victims	5,000
South/North Armagh Victims Encouraging Recognition (SAVER/NAVER)	481,516
Southern Health & Social Services Board Trauma Advisory Panel	114,220
Sperrin Lakeland Trust	12,132
Springhill Community House	167,621
Springvale Training	106,262
Stepping Stone, Craigavon	55,000
Stewartstown and District Support Group	1,110
Strabane Befriending and Counselling Association	243,609

Victims' organisation	*Amount allocated (£)*
Streetbeat Youth Project	135,908
Sub Committee for Victims	216,121
Support, Training, Education, Employment, Research (STEER) Mental Health	120,521
Survivors of Trauma	637,260
Tar Anall	113,300
Tar Isteach	141,650
Tara Counselling and Personal Development Company Ltd.	353,384
The Bloody Sunday Trust	84,765
The Church's Ministry of Healing	18,000
The Cross Group	11,395
The Ely Centre	142,757
The Royal British Legion (Upperlands Branch)	2,000
The Samaritans, Belfast	8,000
The Samaritans, Coleraine	7,000
The Wider Circle	158,998
Threshold	3,000
Towards Healing and Understanding	5,500
United Services Club	81,073
Victims Support (NI)	52,000
Victims and Survivors Trust (VAST)	343,612
VOICE	24,900
Voices Women's Group	17,054
WAVE Belfast[1]	2,818,345
WAVE Armagh[1]	85,684
WAVE Ballymoney[1]	62,127
WAVE Omagh[1]	76,122
WAVE Londonderry[1]	96,936
West Belfast Cross Community Partnership	48,700
West Tyrone Voice (WTV)	489,172
Western Enterprise Social Legal and Educational Victims Trust	3,950
Western Health & Social Services Board Trauma Advisory Panel	135,491
Women Together	11,641
Yes!	5,000
Total	27,957,111

[1] WAVE Trauma Centre has a network of five branches around Northern Ireland. Major amounts of funding, such as Peace II (£1.39 million) cannot be accurately allocated among the individual locations and have been credited to the Belfast office.

Note:

The Community Foundation for Northern Ireland (formerly Northern Ireland Voluntary Trust) also received £1,123,324 through the EU Special Programme for Peace and Reconciliation (Peace I), which supported victims of violence. The Foundation allocated these funds in support of a number of projects for both ex-offenders and victims. Persons from these groups could benefit from the same project and it is not possible to disaggregate the assistance between the two groups.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Airwave

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what health and safety checks have been made to guarantee the well-being of police officers using the Airwave communications system; and if he will make a statement. [208210]

Caroline Flint: The National Radiological Protection Board's independent Advisory Group on Non-Ionising Radiation (AGNIR) recommended that the Home Office should ensure that emissions from Airwave handsets and vehicle-mounted sets are within international guidelines. Accordingly, the Home Office specified that the maximum transmission power levels should be either 1 Watt (for handsets) or 3 Watts (for vehicle-mounted sets). Independent checks have found that emission levels from Airwave equipment are within international guidelines.

We also commissioned a programme of research on the advice of AGNIR into the remaining areas of uncertainty surrounding the health and safety effects of the TETRA technology that underpins Airwave. This research is nearing completion and has not identified any adverse health effects.

We have also taken forward the AGNIR recommendation for a long-term health monitoring study of police users of Airwave: Imperial College is carrying out this study on behalf of the Home Office.

Birmingham Repertory Theatre

Dr. Evan Harris: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) whether he received an opinion from West Midlands Police on their ability to guarantee the safety of the audience and staff of the Birmingham Repertory Theatre on 21 December, were the theatre to continue to perform the play Behzti; and what assessment he has made of West Midlands Police's capacity to guarantee the audience's safety on 21 December; [207700]

(2) what discussions *(a)* he and *(b)* his officials held with West Midlands Police between 18 and 20 December on whether the police were able to guarantee the safety of the audience and staff of the Birmingham Repertory Theatre in the event of productions of the play Behzti on 20 December and subsequently; and if he will make a statement. [207702]

Caroline Flint: The Chief Constable of the West Midlands Police assured the Home Office on 20 December that he would police any demonstrations in the event of performances of the play Behzti on 20 December and subsequently. The role of the police in policing demonstrations is to preserve the peace, to uphold the law and to prevent the commission of offences.

It is a long-standing tradition in this country that people are free to gather together and to demonstrate their views provided that they do so within the law. However, there is no excuse for violent protest and we totally condemn the violence that was seen outside the Birmingham Repertory Theatre.

Football Banning Orders (Essex)

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many football banning orders have been issued by *(a)* Essex police and *(b)* Southend police in each year since 1997. [208643]

Caroline Flint: Football banning orders are imposed by courts, not by police forces. Currently 39 individuals resident in Essex are subject to football banning orders. These football banning orders were made in the following years:

	Number of current football banning orders
2000	1
2001	0
2002	6
2003	13
2004	19

Cycling

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many cyclists were *(a)* cautioned and *(b)* charged for (i) going through red lights and (ii) cycling in the dark without lights in the last period for which figures are available. [204813]

Caroline Flint: Charges may not lead to proceedings. Statistics of defendants charged with crimes are not collected centrally.

There were two pedal cyclists cautioned and 38 proceeded against at magistrates courts in England and Wales 2003 for the offence of neglect of traffic directions (which will include failing to stop at traffic signals).

There were 25 cyclists cautioned and 213 proceeded against at magistrates courts in England and Wales 2003 for lighting and reflector offences.

Statistics on the numbers of cautions and prosecutions in 2004 will be available in autumn 2005.

European Data Protection Supervisor

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the *(a)* mandate and *(b)* powers of the European Data Protection Supervisor in respect of tackling fraud. [207167]

Mr. Leslie: I have been asked to reply.

The European Data Protection Supervisor has no specific role in respect of fraud matters, except in those circumstances where fraud may raise issues about the adequacy of protection of individual's personal data within the community institutions and bodies.

Firearms Act

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many appeals have been brought against the Chief Constable of Humberside police under section 44 of the Firearms Act 1968 (as amended) since 29 October 2003; and how many were *(a)* dismissed, *(b)* allowed and *(c)* abandoned. [207607]

Caroline Flint: The information requested is not collected by the Home Office.

Gun Crime

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many incidents of gun crime have taken place in Greater London in each of the last three years; and if he will make a statement. [202731]

Caroline Flint: The Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis reports that the total number of gun enabled crime offences is as follows:

12 months to October:	*Number of offences*
2002	4,543
2003	4,143
2004	3,683

The figures cover the whole of the metropolitan police district. The latest published figures show an 11 per cent. fall over the previous 12 month period.

Intelligence-led Operations such as Trident and Trafalgar are having excellent results. The work of these dedicated police operations, with the guidance and support of the Independent Advisory Group, demonstrates the high level of commitment to remove guns from our streets.

In support of this work, the government and the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) are taking forward work on all aspects of gun crime, including targeting the drugs supply markets which often drive the use of firearms; prevention work, including support for community projects through the Connected Fund and by the use of recycled criminal assets; and by working with prolific offenders.

Identity Cards

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will place in the Library a copy of the image capture standards provided to police forces under the Facial Images National Database project. [208281]

Caroline Flint: Yes. Copies of the image capture standards paper titled "Police Standard for Still Digital Image Capture and Data Interchange of Facial/Mugshot and Scar, Mark and Tattoo Images", prepared by the Police Information Technology Organisation (PITO) to police forces in England and Wales, will be placed in the Library.

The draft standards are currently with the Association of Chief Police Officers for its agreement on behalf of police forces.

Initiatives (Funding)

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what budget was allocated to *(a)* the Active Communities Unit, *(b)* the Arson Control Forum, *(c)* each of the Local Arson Control forums, *(d)* the Central Police Training and Development Authority and *(e)* each of the Community Cohesion Pathfinders in each of the last two years; and how many staff each organisation employed in each year. [201860]

Ms Blears: The information is as follows:

(a) The budget for the Active Communities Unit in the financial year 2003–04 was £91 million (including £10 million for "futurebuilders") with 45 staff and in 2004–05 it was £145 million (including £57 million for "futurebuilders") with 41 staff.

(b) The budget for the Arson Control Forum in the financial year 2003–04 was £2.250 million and in 2004–05 it was £4.5 million. The forum does not employ staff directly.

Mobile Phones

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people have been fined under the offence of using a hand-held mobile phone while driving; how many people have contested the fines; and what revenue has been raised through fines, broken down by *(a)* month and *(b)* police authority region. [202283]

Caroline Flint: Data on police action (written warnings, fixed penalty notices and court proceedings) for 2003 on the new offence of driving while using a hand held mobile telephone will not be available until early

2005. Information on appeals and revenue raised through fines is not collected centrally by the Home Department.

2004 data will be published in autumn 2005.

Police Vehicles

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the measures taken by Cleveland Police Authority to install recording equipment in police vehicles to monitor how they are driven; and what plans he has to encourage other police authorities to install such recording equipment. [204825]

Caroline Flint: There are two basic types of recording equipment that might be fitted to police vehicles: incident, or collision, data recorders (IDRs) and journey data recorders (JDRs). IDRs are fitted to a vehicle for the capture and short-term storage of data from on-board sensors. Their primary aim is to assist in establishing what occurred prior to and during a collision. They can be used to supplement physical evidence for incident reconstruction and act as an 'independent witness' in the event of a collision. JDRs give management information on a vehicle's performance. They are typically used by fleet managers to monitor vehicle usage and efficiency.

The fitting of such recording devices is a local operational matter. The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) does however recommend that forces consider such a course. We welcome this. Several forces have fitted devices, some on a pilot trial basis and others as permanent attachments to their vehicles. Some are collecting data on their performance, though where their attachment is part of a package of measures it might be difficult to identify the performance of individual elements.

Policing Costs

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the *(a)* cost and *(b)* total operational time lost as a result of police officers being withdrawn from duty in each police force for the purpose of policing (i) demonstrations and (ii) football matches was in each of the last five financial years. [208339]

Caroline Flint: This information is not held centrally.

Prisons

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what services are provided by the voluntary sector in contracted-out prisons; and if he will make a statement. [203026]

Paul Goggins: There are over 100 voluntary and community sector service providers working across the contracted out prisons. Many of the organisations are multi-service providers and work in more than one prison, others tend to be local and work with individual establishments. While it is not possible to list all the services these organisations provide, the following list is a guide to some of the key areas where services are delivered. This will be placed in the Library.

Sniffer Dogs

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many sniffer dogs have been used by the police and security services in each of the last five years; and how many of these animals have died prematurely while in service. [208244]

Caroline Flint: The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) informs me that approximately 2,220 police dogs were in service at the end of 2004. 134 police dogs were retired during that year, and 26 died prematurely while in service. Information is not available for previous years. It has been the policy of successive Governments to neither confirm nor deny questions concerning the activities of the security and intelligence services.

Speed Cameras

Mr. McLoughlin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many motorists were *(a)* fined and *(b)* banned from driving as a result of the evidence of speed cameras in the West Derbyshire constituency in each of the last five years; and how much money was raised from fines in each year (i) in total and (ii) in Derbyshire. [207455]

Caroline Flint: Available information on the number of fixed penalties and court fines ordered to be paid and on the number of persons disqualified from driving for speeding offences detected by camera in 1998 to 2002 (latest available) within the Derbyshire police force area is shown in tables A and B respectively. Information on the revenue raised from speeding offences is not available centrally but data are given in the table on the amount of fines imposed by the courts and on the estimated revenue from fixed penalties.

It is not possible from the data collected centrally to identify the constituency of West Derbyshire within the geographical area of the Derbyshire police force.

Table A: Fines and fixed penalty data for speeding offences detected by camera[1,2], in the Derbyshire police force area, 1998–2002

	Court proceedings[3]			Fixed penalties	
	Number of fines	*Total amount of fine (£)*	*Average fine*	*Number of tickets[4]*	*Estimated revenue (£)[5]*
1998	1,310	119,500	91	10,600	424,000
1999	1,230	112,500	92	8,500	340,000
2000	870	77,000	89	8,100	351,000
2001	790	69,000	88	10,100	606,000
2002	610	69,000	114	33,700	2,022,000

[1] Automatic cameras until 1998, all camera types from 1999.

[2] Offences under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and The Motor Vehicles (Speed Limits on Motorways) Regulations 1973.

[3] Includes cases where fixed penalty notices were originally issued but not paid and subsequently referred to court.

[4] Paid ie no further action.

[5] Estimate based on £40 fixed penalty charge to October 2000. From November 2000 the penalty was raised to £60.

Table B: Number of persons disqualified[1] from driving at all courts for speeding offences detected by camera[2,3] in the Derbyshire police force area, 1998–2002

	Persons disqualified
1998	9
1999	9
2000	7
2001	18
2002	9

[1] Excludes persons disqualified under s.35 of the Road Traffic Offenders Act 1988 (penalty points system).

[2] Offences under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and The Motor Vehicles (Speed Limits on Motorways) Regulations 1973.

[3] Automatic cameras until 1998, all camera types from 1999.

CABINET OFFICE

Constitutional Treaty

John Cryer: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office (1) what guidance has been issued to civil servants regarding providing public information on the proposed Constitutional Treaty for the European Union; [208534]

(2) what guidance he plans to issue to the civil service on its role *(a)* prior to and *(b)* during the referendum on the Constitutional Treaty for the European Union; [208535]

(3) what discussions he has had with the Cabinet Secretary regarding the role of the civil service prior to and during the proposed referendum on the Constitutional Treaty for the European Union; and what guidance was issued to civil servants regarding their neutrality in previous referendums; [208536]

(4) what regulations under the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 govern the role of the civil service prior to and during referendum campaigns; [208762]

(5) if he will make a statement on the role of the civil service in the proposed referendum on the Constitutional Treaty for the European Union; [208763]

(6) if he will make a statement on the role of the Government Information and Communication Service prior to and during the proposed referendum on the Constitutional Treaty for the European Union; [208764]

(7) if he will make a statement on the role of special advisers prior to and during the proposed referendum on the Constitutional Treaty for the European Union. [208765]

Mr. Miliband: Guidance to civil servants, including special advisers and members of the Government Information and Communication Service, on their conduct during the referendum on the Treaty establishing a Constitution for the EU, and the period leading up to it, will be issued in due course. It will be made public. In addition Section 125 of the provisions of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 will apply.

The most recent example of guidance issued to civil servants on their conduct during referendums is that issued for the referendum on a regional assembly for the North East (available in the Library of the House and on the Cabinet Office website at http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/propriety_and ethics/publications/pdf/nerarg.pdf).

Freedom of Information

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many departmental files have been destroyed in each of the past five years. [203389]

Mr. Miliband *[holding answer 8 December 2004]:* Departmental files are retained and destroyed in line with policies set out by the National Archives. In accordance with its selection policies and disposal schedules, the Department has destroyed the following number of files in each of the last five years—1,731 (1999), 1,387 (2000), 2,982 (2001), 2,960 (2002), 3,728 (2003). In addition, it is estimated, that approximately 1,300 files each year were not selected for transfer to the National Archives and were therefore also destroyed.

Parliamentary Questions

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office when he will reply to the question tabled on 3 December 2004, by the hon. Member for New Forest East, ref 203389, asking how many departmental files have been destroyed in each of the past five years. [208328]

Mr. Miliband *[holding answer 13 January 2005]:* I have replied to the hon. Member today.

Video Conferencing Units

Norman Baker: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many video conferencing units are installed in *(a)* her Department and *(b)* each agency of her Department; what percentage of offices have these facilities in each case; and what plans there are to increase the number. [201074]

Mr. Miliband: 12 video conferencing units are available within Cabinet Office buildings (including three mobile units). In central London, 25 per cent. of the buildings occupied by the Department have video conferencing facilities, including the main buildings at 70 Whitehall and Admiralty Arch. There is another video conferencing unit at the Centre for Management and Policy Studies' Sunningdale Park site and another at the Emergency Planning College's site in Easingwold. The Government News Network offices make occasional use of the video conferencing facilities of the Government Offices in the Regions.

There are existing plans to purchase one further mobile video conferencing unit. In addition, the Cabinet Office intends to review the existing provision of video conferencing facilities to identify whether further efficiencies can be gained from increasing usage.

The Government Car and Despatch Agency has no video conferencing facilities.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Censuses

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the reasons were for the early release of those 19th-century decennial censuses for *(a)* England and Wales, *(b)* Scotland and *(c)* Northern Ireland, which were released for public inspection before they were 100 years old. [208634]

Mr. Leslie: In England and Wales, 19th century census returns contain fewer details about individuals than those conducted in the 20th century. Censuses up to 1851 were made available in the early 20th century because they often constituted the only proof of age and therefore of entitlement to state pensions from 1908 onwards. All decennial census returns from 1861 onwards have been made generally available to the public after a period of 100 years.

The taking of the decennial census in Scotland, provision of public access to the census in Scotland and freedom of information in Scotland are all devolved matters, but the Registrar-General for Scotland will be writing to the hon. Member shortly.

The national archives of Ireland in Dublin has custody of surviving 19th century all-Ireland census records that have been released in accordance with decisions taken by the Government of the Republic of Ireland.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will publish the texts of the undertakings of confidentiality which were printed on the census documents for *(a)* 1911 and *(b)* 1921, for (i) England and Wales, (ii) Scotland and (iii) Northern Ireland. [208635]

Mr. Leslie: The information is as follows.

(i) In England and Wales, the census form for 1911 included the following undertaking:

> "The contents of the schedule will be treated as confidential. Strict care will be taken that no information is disclosed with regard to individual persons. The returns are not to be used for proof of age, as in connection with old age pensions, or for any other purpose than the preparation of statistical tables".

I am advised by the Registrar-General for England and Wales that the undertaking of confidentiality on the 1921 census form was 'strictly confidential'.

(ii) The taking of the decennial census in Scotland and provision of public access to the records of the census in Scotland are devolved matters, but the Registrar-General for Scotland will be writing to the hon. Member shortly.

(iii) All-Ireland census returns for 1911 are in the custody of the National Archives of Ireland in Dublin. The family return used for households included the following undertaking:

> The facts will be published in general abstracts only, and strict care will be taken that the returns are not used for the gratification of curiosity, or for any other object than that of rendering the Census as complete as possible.

The census in Northern Ireland was next conducted in 1926. The following statement was printed on the householder's return:

> 'All particulars given in this return will be regarded as strictly confidential and will be used only to prepare general census summaries'.

Constitutional Treaty

John Cryer: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs who will be entitled to vote in the proposed referendum on the Constitutional Treaty for the European Union. [208537]

Mr. Leslie: The final decision on the franchise will be a matter for Parliament to decide. The starting point, however, will be that those people eligible to vote in elections to the Westminster Parliament, as well as members of the House of Lords and the people of Gibraltar, will be eligible to vote. The Westminster franchise consists of British citizens resident in the UK either currently or at any point in the past fifteen years, Commonwealth citizens with leave to enter or remain in the UK, and citizens of the Republic of Ireland (with whom the UK has a reciprocal arrangement). All those in the categories must also be of voting age and not subject to any other legal incapacity to be eligible to vote.

John Cryer: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what powers the Electoral Commission will have regarding Government expenditure on the Constitutional Treaty for the European Union. [208544]

Mr. Leslie: None. It is not within the remit of the Electoral Commission to regulate Government expenditure on the Constitutional Treaty.

John Cryer: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs (1) what regulations govern spending in the UK by *(a)* the European Commission, *(b)* the European Parliament and *(c)* European Union agencies regarding the Constitutional Treaty for the European Union prior to and during the proposed referendum on the Treaty; [208545]

(2) what spending limits will apply to campaigning on the Referendum on the EU Constitutional Treaty by agencies of the European Union prior to and during the proposed referendum. [208546]

Mr. Leslie: The Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 would regulate spending during the referendum period by the European Commission, European Parliament and agencies of the European Union. They will be subject to a spending limit of £10,000 during that period.

John Cryer: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will make a statement on the rules governing activities by *(a)* political parties, *(b)* trade unions, *(c)* businesses, *(d)* campaigning organisations, *(e)* the European Union and *(f)* the Government prior to and during the proposed referendum on the Constitutional Treaty for the European Union. [208555]

Mr. Leslie: The rules governing these organisations' activities are set out in the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA). According to

PPERA, political parties, trade unions, businesses, and campaigning organisations can register as permitted participants, and may apply for designated organisation status. Different rules apply whether an organisation is a permitted participant or a designated organisation.

The European Union cannot be a permitted participant in the referendum, and so therefore can only spend up to £10,000 during the referendum period.

Different rules apply to the Government's participation. Section 125 of PPERA restricts the publication of information relating to the referendum by the Government during the 28 days before the poll.

John Cryer: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what consultations the Department has undertaken with the *(a)* Electoral Commission and *(b)* other organisations regarding the Electoral Commission's powers to regulate spending during the proposed referendum on the Constitutional Treaty for the European Union. [208556]

Mr. Leslie: None. The powers to regulate spending in a national referendum are already set out in the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000.

John Cryer: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will make a statement on his Department's plans for the referendum on the constitutional treaty for the European Union. [208563]

Mr. Leslie: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office will be responsible for the Bill necessary to enable a referendum to be held. DCA have been assisting them in relation to matters concerning the holding of the referendum, and will continue to assist during the passage of the Bill and its implementation.

John Cryer: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what his estimate is of the cost of the referendum on the constitutional treaty for the European Union. [208564]

Mr. Leslie: No comparative figures are available as the only UK-wide referendum was held in 1975. We would expect the cost of running the referendum to be similar to the cost of a general election. The last general election cost approximately £80 million.

Court Computer Network

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what steps are being taken to ensure the safety of information transferred over the new computer network which links courts and other criminal justice agencies. [208672]

Mr. Leslie: The transfer of information between the courts and other criminal justice organisations takes place over secure private government networks using reliable messaging protocols based on international standards. The various systems send and receive messages constructed to support specific business processes. A system cannot be asked for information without prior agreement. My Department also uses its own secure networks for transfer between courts, which adhere to the same strict protocols and are regularly audited to ensure compliance to security standards.

Criminal Justice

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs whether the Lord Chancellor has discussed reform of the Criminal Justice System with the Secretary of State for Home Affairs since the latter's appointment. [209486]

Mr. Leslie: The Lord Chancellor and I have regular meetings with the Secretary of State for Home Affairs where reforms of the Criminal Justice System are discussed.

E-mails

Norman Baker: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what steps he takes to ensure that material of future historical importance is retained, in relation to the Government's e-mail deletion policy. [208716]

Mr. Leslie: Material of future historical importance, including e-mails, is appraised and selected for permanent preservation under the supervision and guidance of the National Archives (TNA) in accordance with well-established records management policies and procedures. In 2004 guidance issued by the Head of the Home Civil Service underlined the status of e-mails created or received by departments as

> "public records . . . subject to departmental records management policies and procedures".

A copy of this guidance is available in the Library. In addition, TNA issued specific guidelines to departments on the development of an e-mail policy in 2004. These are available on its website at http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/electronicrecords/advice/

Freedom of Information

Llew Smith: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what information he has collected on the *(a)* number and *(b)* nature of requests made across (i) Government, (ii) local government and (iii) non-departmental public bodies under the Freedom of Information Act 2000; and if he will make a statement on the operation of the Act to date. [208238]

Mr. Leslie: Parliament passed the Freedom of Information Act four years ago. Now, after a long transition period in which public authorities have had the full time and opportunity to prepare for this change, the Act has come fully into force.

It is as yet very early days in the operation of access rights under the Freedom of Information Act. However, the Government is confident that, over time, there will be a real cultural change to one of openness and transparency in all public authorities.

My Department is responsible for monitoring central Government requests, including NDPBs, by the criteria agreed by the Domestic Affairs Cabinet Committee. Monitoring information on requests received by FOI specialists within central Government will be collected and reported quarterly, the first statistical report being due in late spring 2005.

Our current estimate, based on informal reports from Government Departments, is that 1,200 more complex requests were received by Freedom of Information practitioner's across central Government between 4 and 11 January 2005.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how the Department plans to monitor the number of requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000; and how often, and where, it plans to publish information on the number of such requests to *(a)* Government departments and *(b)* other public agencies. [209202]

Mr. Leslie: My Department will monitor requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to core central Government Departments as defined in Schedule 1 of the Act. It includes all ministerial Departments, executive NDPBs and Executive Agencies but not the public bodies listed in Part VI of Schedule 1.

We will monitor those requests which come to the attention of departmental FOI specialists. Monitoring information will be collected and reported quarterly, the first statistical report being due in late Spring of 2005 to be published on the DCA Freedom of Information website.

In addition, DCA will publish a report on the first six months of the Act's operation in the Autumn of 2005 and an annual report in spring of 2006 and subsequent years. These reports will contain more detailed statistics and analysis of the operation of the Act in central Government, and will include figures for individual Government Departments, subject to the data being of sufficient quality.

IT (Disciplinary Procedures)

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many staff in his Department have *(a)* received official warnings and *(b)* faced disciplinary procedures following breaches of IT policy in each year since 1997. [205813]

Mr. Leslie: There have been 99 cases where staff have faced disciplinary procedures following breaches of IT Security Policy since 1997. The cases have been broken down by year in the following table.

	Number
1997	0
1998	5
1999	7
2000	5
2001	11
2002	15
2003	4
2004	52

I am unable to report on the number of official warnings for breaches of IT policy, as this information is not held centrally, and to obtain it will incur disproportionate cost.

New Court House, Lisburn

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what progress has been made in identifying a site for a new court house in Lisburn; and if he will make a statement. [208377]

Mr. Leslie *[holding answer 17 January 2005]:* The Court Service intends to publicly advertise for potential development sites in the Lisburn area which would be suitable for the construction of a new courthouse.

Newspapers/Periodicals

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will list the *(a)* newspapers and *(b)* periodicals taken by his Department in each year since 1997; and how much the Department spent on each in each year. [207643]

Mr. Lammy: The information requested is as follows.

(a) An aggregated list of the newspapers taken by my Department since 1997 is as follows:

Evening Standard
Sun
Mirror
Star
Daily Mail
Express
Telegraph
Times
Financial Times
Independent
Guardian
Scotsman
The Herald
Sunday People
Catholic Herald
Catholic Times
The Universe
The Tablet

(b) An aggregated list of the periodicals taken by my Department is as follows:

Accountancy
Architects Journal
Australian Legal Monthly Digest
Bank of England Quarterly Bulletin
Barrister
Bookseller
Building
Cambridge Law Journal
Campaign
Caterer and Hotelkeeper
Child and Family Law Quarterly
Choice
Columbia Law Review
Common Law World Review
Company Lawyer
Computers and Law
Computer Weekly
Construction Industry Law Letter

Construction News
Conveyancer and Property Lawyer
Counsel
Credit Today
Criminal Law Week
Current Law Week
Design Week
Digit
Economist
Estates Gazette
Family Law
Fire Safety Engineering
House of Commons Daily Hansard
House of Commons Weekly Information Bulletin
House of Commons Fortnightly Index
House of Lords Daily Hansard
Housing Today
Human Rights Case Digest
Independent Lawyer
Industrial Law Journal
Innovations in Information
Inside Housing Magazine
Insolvency Law Practice Newsletter
Insurance Law Monthly
International Journal of Constitutional Law
International Journal of Evidence and Proof
International Journal of Law and Information Technology
International Review of Law Computers and Technology
Internet Newsletter for Lawyers
Journal of Criminal Law
Journal of Law and Society
Journal of Legal History
Journal of Social Welfare and Family Law
Judicial Review
Justice of the Peace
Law and Contemporary Problems
Law Society's Gazette
Law Quarterly Review
The Lawyer
Legal Action
Legal Week
Litigation Funding
Litigation Letter
Lloyd's Maritime Law Newsletter
Local Government Chronicle
London Gazette
Legal Studies
The Magistrate
Managing Information
Marketing
Media Lawyer
Medical Litigation
National Institute Economic Review
Newspapers and Business
New Media
New Law Journal
New Scientist
New Statesman
Oxford University Commonwealth Law Journal
PC Magazine
Personal and Medical Injuries Law Letter
PR Week
The Practical Lawyer
Press Gazette
Privacy Laws and Business UK and International Newsletters
Project Manager Today
Property Law Bulletin
Public Magazine
Public Law
Rating and Valuation Reporter
Revolution
Rights of Way Law Review
SCM
Solicitors Journal
The Spectator
SPIN
Statute Law Review
Strategic Communication
Property Law Journal
Vine
Welfare Rights Bulletin
Young Minds Magazine

The expenditure on newspapers, magazines and periodicals in each of the years since 1997 is as follows:

£

	Amount
1997–98	60,200
1998–99	61,700
1999–2000	64,600
2000–01	67,500
2001–02	72,700
2002–03	78,500
2003–04	63,600

Pay Television Subscriptions

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many pay television subscriptions the Department had in each year since 1997; and what the cost was in each year. [207668]

Mr. Lammy: The Department currently has four pay television subscriptions, at an annual cost of £1,580. Information for previous years is not readily available and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Regulation

Ross Cranston: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what steps he has taken to implement the recommendations of the Better Regulation Task Force report, Better Routes to Redress (2004). [208051]

Mr. Lammy: Some have already been implemented and work is under way on taking forward the remaining accepted recommendations. The Ministerial Steering Group and the Action Group are being established and an announcement will be made shortly.

Voter Turnout

Mr. Drew: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs pursuant to the answer given to the hon. Member for Coventry, South (Mr. Cunningham) of 10 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 120W, on voter turnout, what discussions he has had with the Electoral Commission on enhancing voting procedures, including postal and internet voting, at the next general election. [209203]

Mr. Leslie: The Department has regular contact with the Electoral Commission about various electoral issues including postal voting and internet voting. There are no plans to change voting procedures at the next general election. There is no provision for internet voting under current rules.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Benefits Centralisation

Tony Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what progress is being made towards centralising benefits processing in Workington. [208663]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 17 January 2005]:* The Secretary of State announced on 16 September 2004 plans to centralise benefit processing on 81 sites including Carlisle.

On 14 December 2004, I met with my hon. Friend, the Member for Workington, to discuss the implications for benefit processing staff in Workington. Departmental officials have since visited West Cumbria and Carlisle and met with Public and Commercial Services (PCS) officials to respond to their suggestion for a second processing centre in Workington.

The Department cannot justify a second long-term benefit processing centre in Cumbria and needs to take a firm decision so we can deliver the planned business improvements. We therefore confirm our original decision to centralise benefit processing in Carlisle. We will continue to work closely with staff and the PCS to manage the transition and redeployment of staff affected.

IT Projects

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will list his Department's IT projects in each year since 1997, broken down by *(a)* amount spent, *(b)* purpose, *(c)* cost of over-run and *(d)* time of over-run. [205781]

Jane Kennedy: The Department for Work and Pensions was created in June 2001. The Department and its businesses currently have in excess of 100 individual projects which encompass information technology (IT) changes to a greater or lesser extent. The Department's major projects are those contained in its modernisation programme. For the most part, these projects embrace both IT and business change.

The information in the table lists the Department's current major programmes and projects that include significant IT change, with information on their purpose, due end date, over-run status and spend to date.

It should be noted that project details may alter as they pass through the project lifecycle and as the Department considers its wider plans as part of the normal spending review process.

Project	*Purpose*	*Due end date*	*Expenditure to date (£ million)*	*Over-run*
Customer Management System	This system is an information gathering business process for working age income support jobseekers' allowance and incapacity benefit claims and changes of circumstances. It will allow information supplied by the customer to be gathered electronically by staff, improving efficiency and customer service. Staff will be able to check information supplied against that already held.	March 2006	219	n/a
Benefit Processing Replacement Programme	The programme aims to deliver a core IT platform that provides a lasting foundation for modern flexible IT solutions in support of business priorities.	October 2006	18	n/a
New Tax Credits	This project supports the implementation of new tax credits by the Inland Revenue by putting a tax credits service in place for DWP customers (principally through Jobcentre Plus) and ensuring that necessary amendments are made to DWP benefits.	April 2005	114	n/a
ISCS/JSA Modernisation Project	Delivered initiatives that enhanced or augmented existing working age IT systems. These included the sharing of electronic data with disability living allowance, attendance Allowance and personal details computer systems.	August 2004	17	Completed on time
Digital Office Infrastructure	DOI provided a modern IT infrastructure platform across the Department providing access for all staff to the internet and intranet and modern business software.	June 2004	722	Completed on time
Managing Core Systems Estate	To improve the ways in which our core legacy systems are managed.	March 2006	4	n/a

Project	*Purpose*	*Due end date*	*Expenditure to date (£ million)*	*Over-run*
Pensions Forecasting Programme	To establish the new combined pension forecasting service and enhance and replace the existing individual pension forecasting IT system.	April 2005	36	n/a
Pensions Credit	This project successfully introduced pension credit in October 2003. It delivered new IT functionality to existing DWP systems, and associated business products (e.g. training, staff guidance, customer notifications).	October 2004	294	Completed on time
Pensions Transformation Project	The programme will transform the pension service, bringing together business and IT change in ways that improve customer service and deliver efficiencies.	2006	113	n/a
Customer Information System	This project will deliver a database of key citizen information to be shared across DWP. The database will complement information currently available in the Department's key customer information systems, i.e. personal details computer system and departmental central index, and become their replacement.	February 2007	14	n/a
Payment Modernisation Programme	The payment modernisation programme aims to establish direct payment into a bank or building society account as the normal, method of payment for all customers. This includes those who wish to collect their money from the Post Office.	December 2005	297	n/a
Resource Management	This programme will provide modernised HR, financial and procurement functions for DWP staff. It will introduce significant business process change, enabling Departmental resources to be managed more effectively.	September 2006	70	n/a
Debt Management	The debt programme introduces a new organisational structure based on 10 Debt Centres and a Commercial off the Shelf (COTS) package to provide new Management Information Systems, combined with increased focus on the management and ultimately reduction of debt stock.	April 2005	70	n/a

Note:
Additionally the Department has a Private Finance Initiative contract for the provision of IT services to the Child Support Agency worth approximately £456 million over 10 years. The Department is working closely with EDS to stabilise the new Child Support IT system. A decision on timescales for migration and conversion of existing cases to new rules will be made by Ministers once they are confident that the system is fully stable. Meanwhile, the Department will continue to deduct a percentage of its monthly payments to EDS.

New Deal

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in the Leyton and Wanstead constituency have found work through new deal programmes since they were introduced. [208767]

Jane Kennedy: The new deal has been very successful in helping more than 1.2 million people into work including 1,960 in the Leyton and Wanstead constituency.

Information on numbers helped into work by each new deal programme is in the table.

Number of people who have found work through new deal programmes in the Leyton and Wanstead constituency

Programme	*People gaining a job*
New deal for young people	970
New deal 25 plus	520
New deal for lone parents	380
New deal 50 plus	90

Notes:
1. All data is to September 2004, except for new deal 50 plus which is to March 2003.
2. New deal for disabled people and new deal for partners is not available at parliamentary constituency level.
3. Figures have been rounded to the nearest 10.
Source:
New Deal Evaluation Database, DWP Information and Analysis Directorate

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Afghanistan

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the outcome has been of investigations undertaken by US authorities into deaths of two people detained by US authorities at Bagram Airbase in Afghanistan in December 2002; and if he will make a statement. [208774]

Mr. Rammell: A US Army Criminal Investigation Division investigation has recommended that charges be brought against 26 soldiers. We understand that the appropriate US military authorities are considering that recommendation.

China

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to European counterparts concerning an EU-wide demarche to the Government of China on the recent arrest of Pastor Zhang Rongliang; and if he will make a statement. [208393]

Mr. Rammell: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Portsmouth, South (Mr. Hancock) on 13 January 2005, *Official Report*, columns 634–35W.

Departmental Advertising

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs in which Muslim newspapers the Department advertises; and what kinds of advertising the Department places in Muslim newspapers. [201699]

Mr. Alexander: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) does not currently advertise in any specific Muslim newspapers. In the past we have placed recruitment advertisements in the Muslim News and Q News, but found that the response rate was disappointing and that we attracted more minority ethnic applications when advertising in the mainstream publications.

Centre Point Group, who administer our recruitment campaigns, also place advertisements with Works for Me, the Voice and the Ethnic Media News (covering Eastern Eye, India Weekly, Asian Times, Caribbean Times, African Times and New Nation). We also have a range of diversity projects that run throughout the year to raise awareness of the FCO and opportunities to work with us.

Departmental Equipment

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many items of electrical equipment were used by his Department in the last year for which figures are available, broken down by *(a)* cost and *(b)* number of each type of item. [205736]

Mr. Rammell: As at 31 March 2004, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's fixed asset register showed that it had the following classes of electrical equipment available for use:

798 items of technical equipment with a net book value of approximately £9 million.

570 items of office machinery with a net book value of approximately £2 million.

151 items of communications equipment with a net book value of approximately £1 million.

These items may be single or grouped assets with an individual value of £3,000 or more. Collating a full record of electronic items of less than £3,000 in value held by the Department's global network of posts could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Diego Garcia

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what arrangements US military forces have for access to the British territory of Diego Garcia; and for how long these arrangements are programmed to continue. [208680]

Mr. Rammell: Under the Exchange of Notes between the United Kingdom and United States concerning the Availability for Defence Purposes of the British Indian Ocean Territory of 30 December 1966 (Cmnd. 3231), the whole territory is to remain available to meet the possible defence needs of the two countries for an initial period of 50 years from 1966, and thereafter for a further period of 20 years unless either party has given prior notice to terminate it. A further Exchange of Notes concluded in 1976 (Cmnd. 6413) regulates the establishment and functioning of the facilities of the United States in Diego Garcia and related matters.

Diplomatic Representation (Middle East)

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the budget for diplomatic representation to countries in the Middle East is for the current financial year; and what the budgetary allocation is to each country. [208401]

Mr. Rammell: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office's Middle East and North Africa Directorate's budget (administration, capital and programme) for diplomatic representation in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) countries for the current financial year is £32,597,369. MENA countries and their individual budgets are:

	£
Algiers	943,279
Bahrain	989,071
Egypt	3,199,879
Iran	1,761,428
Israel	2,217,467
Palestinian Authority	1,897,598
Jordan	1,913,518
Kuwait	1,768,955
Lebanon	1,487,953
Libya	1,793,988
Morocco	1,740,398
Oman	1,475,214
Qatar	942,087
Saudi Arabia	3,155,757
Syria	1,380,930
Tunisia	966,972
United Arab Emirates	4,046,709
Yemen	916,166

International Labour Organisation

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what work his Department has undertaken with the International Labour Organisation to promote independent trade union representation among the people of Iraq. [207718]

Mr. Rammell: The Transitional Administrative Law, which came into force on 28 June 2004, made provision for the right of all Iraqis to join unions. We understand that at least 12 national trade unions have already been set up and four open conferences have been held. The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions organised a successful fact-finding mission in early 2004, partly funded by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, which looked at the state of trade unions in Baghdad, Basra and northern Iraq.

The Government continues to support the active role the International Labour Organisation (ILO) is playing in Iraq and has contact with the ILO on Iraq as one of the agencies working as part of the International Reconstruction Fund for Iraq. An ILO sponsored conference on Jobs for the Future of Iraq took place in Amman in December 2004. Industrial relations were raised in the outstanding issues paper prepared for the conference, and a panel convened on industrial relations, tripartism and social dialogue. The conference concluded with an action plan on employment creation in Iraq. The implementing partner for these activities is the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs together with the ILO.

Iraq

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs who will be entitled to vote in the Iraqi election on 30 January in Falluja; what the anticipated number on the electoral roll in that area is; what arrangements are in place for those who fled the recent fighting to vote; and if he will make a statement. [207247]

Mr. Rammell: Residents of Falluja will be able to vote at polling stations throughout the province of Al Anbar, and in designated centres in Salahadin province and West Baghdad. The number of eligible voters in Al Anbar province is estimated to be 574,000. The Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq are developing contingency plans to deal with those people displaced following the military action in Falluja. We understand that these arrangements will be publicised nearer to the elections.

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what work his Department has undertaken in Iraq since 1 July 2004 to promote the benefits of trade union membership. [207717]

Mr. Rammell: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office follows closely trade union issues in Iraq and supports the Department for International Development (DFID) activities in this area. Requests to support trade union activity in Iraq from UNISON and the International Centre for Trade Union Rights (ICTUR), in partnership with Iraqi organisations, have been approved under DFID's Civil Society Fund (CSF). In addition, a proposal from the Trades Union Congress has been received for consideration under the CSF.

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what Her Majesty's Government's policy is on the closure by the Iraqi interim Government of Al-Jazeera offices; whether his Department's representatives in Iraq have made representations on this issue at official meetings; and if he will make a statement. [208835]

Mr. Rammell: We have repeatedly made clear to the Iraqi interim Government the importance we attach to media freedom in Iraq and the need to strengthen the institutions established by the Coalition Provisional Authority to ensure this. We will continue to do so.

Israel

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he visited the wall now being built by the Israeli authorities on Palestinian land on his recent visit to Palestine; and if he will make a statement. [208739]

Mr. Rammell: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary saw parts of the barrier being constructed around Jerusalem during his visit to Palestine on 25 November. He raised the issue of the barrier in his meeting with the Israeli Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom on 24 November. He expressed this Government's view that while Israel has a legitimate right to defend itself against terrorist attacks, construction of the barrier on occupied land is unlawful. Lasting security can only be delivered by a negotiated settlement, not by unilateral measures such as the barrier.

Madagascar

Sir Paul Beresford: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the reasons are for the proposed closure of the British embassy in Madagascar; and if he will make a statement. [208961]

Mr. Mullin *[holding answer 17 January 2005]*: As my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary stated on 15 December 2004, *Official Report*, columns 137–40WS, we are making changes to our overseas network to reflect changing demands and challenges and to ensure the UK has a cost-effective and flexible network of overseas representation. This involves the closure of several diplomatic posts including the British embassy in Antananarivo.

This is in no way a reflection on the current Government of Madagascar or on the quality of our bilateral relations. We will work with the Government of Madagascar to establish alternative forms of British representation.

Missing Children

Huw Irranca-Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what support and guidance his Department provides to parents or legal guardians who have travelled abroad to locate missing children aged 16 to 18-years-old in *(a)* Spain, *(b)* other EU countries and *(c)* non-EU countries. [207887]

Mr. Mullin: Responsibility for locating children overseas lies with local police forces. Consular staff in overseas posts provide consular assistance to parents where they can, irrespective of the age of their children. Additionally, consular directorate in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in London liaises closely with parents travelling overseas to locate children. They can provide advice about travel and accommodation, and, where necessary, details of English speaking lawyers. Consular staff often have contacts with local police and appropriate non-governmental organisations that they will use to assist British nationals overseas as appropriate.

Park Yang-Choi

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the North Korean Government concerning the safety of Park Yong-Choi, following his repatriation from China in October 2004. [208394]

Mr. Rammell: We have raised Mr. Park's case with the North Korean authorities at official level, both in London and Pyongyang, seeking confirmation of his safety and well-being. We await their response.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will raise with the Governments of China and North Korea the case of Mr. Park Yang-Choi, who has been forcibly repatriated from China to North Korea. [208306]

Mr. Rammell: We have raised Mr. Park's case with the North Korean authorities, seeking confirmation of his safety and well-being, and we await their response. We also supported an EU demarche to the Chinese authorities on Mr. Park's case last year.

Parliamentary Answers

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether it is his Department's policy that all parliamentary written answers given by his Department should be displayed on the Department's website on the day of answer. [208076]

Mr. Straw: Parliamentary written answers are already accessible on the day following the receipt of the answer by the hon. Member via *Hansard* and the UK Parliament website at www.parliament.uk.

UN Human Development Report

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the UN on the publication of the Third UN Human Development Report on the Arab World. [207992]

Mr. Rammell: My right hon. Friend the Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean discussed the Arab Human Development Reports and follow-up action with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in November last year. While drafting and publication of the reports is the responsibility of their Arab authors and the UNDP, the UK welcomes the reports' focus on the changes needed in the region to ensure sustainable political, economic and social development. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office is supporting a number of UNDP programmes that help implement the recommendations contained in the reports.

Uzbekistan

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Government of Uzbekistan about securing greater independence of the country's judicial system. [208140]

Mr. Rammell: We regularly raise implementation of the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture's recommendations. Recommendation *(d)* calls on the Government to

> "take the necessary measures to establish and ensure the independence of the judiciary in the performance of their duties in conformity with international standards, notably the United Nations Basic Principles on the Independence of the Judiciary".

In 2004 the UK funded an Electronic Court Reporting Project implemented by the American Bar Association CEELI, a public service project supporting the independence of the judiciary. It was preceded by a study tour to the UK by Uzbek judges.

We engaged in extensive trial monitoring during the terrorist trials of July to October 2004, which gave lawyers the confidence to put forward strong cases for their clients, gave the defendants the confidence to speak more openly and ensured that trials were conducted with a greater degree of openness and fairness. As a result, we believe that those on trial who were convicted received lower sentences than otherwise might have been expected.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Government of Uzbekistan about *(a)* permitting the registration of independent political parties and *(b)* participation by independent candidates in future parliamentary elections. [208144]

Mr. Rammell: We were very disappointed that no opposition political parties had achieved registration in Uzbekistan for the parliamentary elections in December 2004.

We lobbied the Uzbek authorities throughout 2004 on the registration of independent political parties. The UK, together with EU partners, met Foreign Minister Safayev on 11 November 2004 and urged progress towards international election standards and the registration of independents for more credible elections.

On 29 December I made a statement on the recent elections in Uzbekistan which said

> "the fact that opposition groups were not allowed to register undermines the credibility of any claims that these were democratic elections. A democratic process, political pluralism and respect for the rule of law are essential for long-term stability and economic prosperity in Uzbekistan and will provide a more secure environment for the country and the region as a whole".

We will continue to lobby the Uzbek authorities on the registration of independent political parties and the participation by independent candidates in future parliamentary elections.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the extent of implementation by the Government of Uzbekistan of the recommendations by the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture. [208145]

Mr. Rammell: Many of the recommendations remain to be addressed but we have seen some progress which has been mostly in terms of developing legislation.

> Recommendation B: Definition of Torture. The Supreme Court resolution 17 of December 2003 defined torture. The definition is that of the UN Convention Against Torture. The definition is not yet on the statute. The Interior Ministry (MVD) has told us they are prosecuting officials in accordance with the new definition anyway.
>
> Recommendation E: Independent investigation of all allegations of torture. This recommendation says all allegations should be independently investigated. The Uzbek authorities permitted independent investigation of the death in custody of Andrei Shelkavenko in May 2004 and in January 2005 have agreed to allow a US pathologist access in the investigation of the death in custody of Samandar Umarov. Torture was disproved in the Shelkavenko case. But there are still many more cases of alleged torture which are not yet being independently investigated.
>
> Recommendation O: Training for law enforcement agents regarding rights of those deprived of liberty. This has improved through projects implemented by the UN Development Programme and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe with MVD investigators and the penitentiary system.

We recently received an update on activities implemented under the Uzbek National Action Plan on Torture through which Uzbekistan intends to carry out the recommendations of the UN Special Rapporteur. We are looking at this latest update with our EU partners to consider how we can work with the Uzbek Government to achieve further progress.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with his counterparts in the European Union about the Partnership and Co-operation agreement with Uzbekistan and recent information on the country's record on human rights, democratisation and economic reform. [208146]

Mr. Rammell: The Partnership and Co-operation agreement (PCA) states that respect for democracy and human rights and progress towards economic freedom constitute essential elements of the EU-Uzbekistan relationship. The EU Co-operation Council meets annually at ministerial level to supervise the implementation of the PCA and to examine any major issues arising within the framework of the agreement.

The last Co-operation Council took place on 27 January 2004 during which the presidency and Commission stressed to the Uzbek delegation the importance of economic and political reform and positive developments on human rights. The next Co-operation Council under the Luxembourg presidency is scheduled for 1 February 2005.

EU heads of mission meet regularly in Tashkent between themselves and with the Uzbek authorities to discuss how best to encourage the development of these themes. On 7 January 2005, at a meeting with Deputy Prime Minister Ganiev, the Uzbek ambassador to Belgium, and the Uzbek ambassador designate to the EU and NATO, Vladimir Norov, the EU again highlighted the need for economic liberalisation and progress towards democracy and improved human rights.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the appropriateness of TACIS funding for projects with the Uzbekistan Parliament. [208147]

Mr. Rammell: The UK raised concerns about initial European Commission TACIS funding proposals for Uzbekistan for 2005–06. We considered that they did not take sufficiently into account the country's poor record in meeting EU objectives of respect for democratic principles and human rights. In response to these concerns the Commission made clear in its Indicative Programme that the TACIS Central Asia Programme would take into account democratic principles and human rights when determining the final budget allocations.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the European Union about the scope for increased funding of projects in Uzbekistan which focus on *(a)* grass roots development, *(b)* poverty alleviation and *(c)* education. [208148]

Mr. Rammell: We have supported the poverty reduction focus of recent TACIS action programmes for central Asia, especially track 3 of the programmes. This is a pilot poverty reduction scheme seeking to help the most vulnerable groups. It aims to link relief with rehabilitation and longer-term development. Particular attention is given to promoting civil society involvement. Substantial increases in funding for this component have been proposed. Track 2 also provides assistance to developing the education sector.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the Free Farmers Party in Uzbekistan is a registered political party. [208149]

Mr. Rammell: Ozod Dehqonlar or the Free Farmers Party is not a registered party. It applied for registration to the Ministry of Justice in January 2004, but was refused a month later.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what representations he has made to the Government of Uzbekistan about the rejection of the applications for registration by *(a)* the Human Rights Society of Uzbekistan, *(b)* the Mazlum Human Rights Group, *(c)* Mothers Against the Death Penalty and Torture and *(d)* Democracy and Law; [208150]

(2) if he will urge the Government of Uzbekistan to revise Cabinet of Ministers internal decree No. 523 in order to decrease the level of control over the activities of international non-governmental organisations; [208168]

(3) if he will urge the Government of Uzbekistan to allow international non-governmental organisations and journalists to operate more freely in the country; [208169]

(4) if he will urge the Government of Uzbekistan to revise Cabinet of Ministers decree No. 56 and other internal documents to reduce the level of Government control over financial assistance for non-governmental organisations; [208176]

(5) if he will urge the Government of Uzbekistan to institute a simple and quick registration procedure for international and domestic non-governmental organisations. [208180]

Mr. Rammell: Both bilaterally and with EU partners, we have regularly and repeatedly drawn our deep concern about the NGO climate in Uzbekistan to senior level attention within the Uzbek Government. In a letter to Uzbek Foreign Minister Safayev of November 2004, my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary reminded him that

> "the activities of civil society groups are an essential part of a healthy democracy."

The EU, supported by the UK, issued a letter in December 2004 to Foreign Minister Safayev, which raised the repeated refusal to register Mothers Against the Death Penalty and Torture despite international recognition for its leader Tamara Chikunova.

We are aware of the constraints placed upon the NGO community in Uzbekistan by the Cabinet of Ministers' decree No. 56 and internal decree No.523. It has been and will continue to be a fundamental aspect of our policy towards Uzbekistan to press for a freer environment in which the local and international NGO communities and journalists can work.

In February 2004 the EU addressed a letter to the Minister of Justice, Mr. Polvon-Zoda, expressing concern that the government requirements for the registration of NGOs would prevent organisations such as Human Rights Watch, International Crisis Group and the Institute for War and Peace reporting from working and publishing. We will continue to stress the importance of putting in place procedures to allow the registration of both domestic and international NGOs.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what inquiries he has made about *(a)* the well-being and *(b)* the treatment in prison of Ruslan Sharipov in Uzbekistan. [208151]

Mr. Rammell: The journalist and human rights activist Ruslan Sharipov was arrested on 26 May 2003 on suspicion of having committed homosexual acts. He was subsequently tried and sentenced to five and a half years in prison.

The UK and others followed the case closely and believe that the serious allegations made against Ruslan Sharipov may have been politically motivated. Concerned by the charges and his possible treatment in prison, the EU, supported by the UK, raised the Sharipov case with Foreign Minister Safayev in January 2004.

In early 2004 he was transferred to an open prison and had his sentence reduced from four to just over three years. In March he was released on probation but was effectively under house arrest. In June he was due to be sent to Bukhara for the continuation of his sentence. Instead, he absconded to Moscow where he spent several months. In October he was granted asylum by the US.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what inquiries he has made about the whereabouts of A. Mahmudov, a member of Tanlov Erk's youth wing in Uzbekistan, who was arrested on the Kazakh border in October 2003. [208152]

Mr. Rammell: We have recently learned that in addition to Mr Mahmudov, Tanlov followers Bakhodir Kambarov and Zakir Umarov have also been arrested and detained in Chirchik and that their relatives have subsequently been ordered to tell the Tanlov management (based abroad) to close the Tanlov website and cease Tanlov activity.

We intend to raise all of these cases with the Uzbek authorities and will continue to stress the importance of political freedom.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what inquiries he has made about the case of Moydijan Kurbanov, the head of Birlik in Jizzakh province, Uzbekistan, who was arrested in February 2004 and later released on remand. [208153]

Mr. Rammell The UK together with Germany and the Netherlands, has closely followed the case of Muhiddin Kurbanov, the Chairman of the Birlik Party for Jizzak Oblast and the Chairman of the Human Rights Society of Uzbekistan in Zarbdor District of Jizzak Oblast.

Following his arrest a representative from our embassy in Tashkent and a German colleague met Kurbanov to examine the details of the case. We also spoke on his behalf with Deputy Prosecutor of Jizzak province Tuichi Khaitaliev, who intimated there would be a positive outcome to the trial.

Kurbanov was sentenced on 12 April to three and a half years in prison. The UK, Germany and the Netherlands (as monitors) jointly wrote to Foreign Minister Safayev and the Prosecutor General regarding the case and Kurbanov's appeal, asking that Kurbanov not be detained prior to the appeal.

Kurbanov was not detained and his three and a half year sentence was suspended on appeal.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will urge the Government of Uzbekistan to conduct a review of law enforcement agencies in order to *(a)* decrease their numbers and *(b)* ensure political control over their activities. [208170]

Mr. Rammell: It is for the Uzbek Government to decide on how it wishes to run its law enforcement agencies. The UK stands ready to offer advice and expertise should the Uzbek authorities ask. We have had discussions with the Uzbek law enforcement agencies on issues such as serious crime, organised crime, international terrorism, people trafficking and illicit drug trafficking. We are working with the Uzbek Government on a Memorandum of Understanding between our respective law enforcement agencies on these issues.

Yemen

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the reasons were for moving the UK's diplomatic representation in Aden to smaller premises. [208399]

Mr. Rammell: I refer my hon. Friend to the written statement made by my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary on 15 December 2004, *Official Report*, columns 137–40WS, on Changes to the Overseas Network of Diplomatic Representation.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

British Energy

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions she has had with the Board of British Energy on bonuses likely to be paid to executives over the next six months; and if she will make a statement. [209271]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: I and my officials meet with British Energy (BE) regularly to discuss a range of issues affecting the company. Executive remuneration is a matter for BE, its remuneration committee and shareholders. As was required prior to the restructuring, Government were consulted on the terms of the company's proposals for its long-term incentive plan. However, it is ultimately for the company to decide on the terms of its bonus structure. BE's shareholders had the opportunity to vote on the proposals as part of their vote on the restructuring and, in future years, will receive and vote on the company's directors' remuneration report.

Business Starts (Wales)

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many new business start-ups there have been in Wales each year since 1996; and how many businesses in Wales have shut down or moved out of Wales in each of these years. [208834]

Nigel Griffiths: DTI figures based solely on VAT registrations and de-registrations for Wales are shown below for 1996 through to 2003. Data for 2004 will be available in Autumn 2005.

Number VAT Registrations, De-registrations in Wales

	VAT registrations	*VAT de-registrations*
1996	6,185	6,425
1997	6,410	5,980
1998	6,190	6,030
1999	6,110	6,235
2000	6,245	5,785
2001	5,935	5,325
2002	6,305	6,435
2003	6,910	6,925

Source:
Business Start-ups and Closures: VAT Registrations and De-registrations 1994–2003, Small Business Service, available from www.sbs.gov.uk/analvtical/statistics/vatstats.php

VAT registrations do not capture all start-up activity. Businesses are unlikely to be registered if they fall below the compulsory VAT threshold, which has risen in each year since 1997. Similarly, businesses that de-register will not necessarily have closed. Only 1.8 million out of 4 million enterprises were registered for VAT at the start of 2003.

The numbers of businesses that have moved out of Wales since 1996 are not available.

Cars

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the effect has been on the UK retail car market of the European Commission Regulation No. 1400/2002, which exempts EC competition rules arrangements in the EU for the distribution of new cars and subsequent servicing; and if she will make a statement. [208617]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Since the introduction of Commission Regulation 1400/2002, the UK new car retail market remains substantially the same in terms of how and by whom new cars are supplied to consumers. However, agreements between manufacturer and retailer, or car repair and service business, made under the regulations provide considerably more freedoms for business, for example, to retail more than one make of new car, or to trade only in cars and carry out no servicing. The full effects of these new freedoms will not be felt before October 2005, the date when car dealers can set up subsidiaries and warehouses within any territory within the EU. The new freedoms will take a considerable time to work through, depending as they do on non investment decisions by individual businesses, but the result should be greater freedom for car sales and aftermarket businesses to operate as they wish, more competition, and better choice for consumers.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the effect of the new EU Block Exemption regulations EU 1400/2002 having on car repair and servicing; and if she will make a statement. [208618]

Mr. Sutcliffe: There is more opportunity for business to compete in the market for repair and servicing new cars and more choice for consumers as to where they have their "within-warranty" new cars serviced as a result of the regulation. Any car repair or servicing business is free to become a part of any car manufacturer's or importer's approved repairer network, provided they meet the qualitative criteria set by the manufacturer. In addition, since the introduction of Commission Regulation 1400/2002 the Office of Fair Trading has ensured that manufacturers no longer include servicing ties to their approved repairer networks within the terms and conditions of new car warranties.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the effect of the Supply of New Cars Order 2000 on the price of new cars in the UK; and if she will make a statement. [208619]

Mr. Sutcliffe: It is reported that, on average, car prices fell in real terms by 9 per cent. between June 1999 and June 2004. While some of this decrease might be attributable to the effect of the Order it is only one of many factors which reflect the final market price of new cars.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether independent car repairers are being given access to technical information under European Commission Regulation No. 1400/2002; and if she will make a statement. [208620]

Mr. Sutcliffe: I understand that all major car manufacturers and importers of new cars into the UK provide means of access to technical information to independent car repairers.

Christmas Cards

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what the cost of postage was for official Departmental Christmas cards in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004; [205085]

(2) what the cost of postage was for official Departmental Christmas cards in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004. [205086]

Ms Hewitt: Records for 2003 and 2004 do not show how many cards were included in other correspondence and the total postage cost cannot therefore be calculated.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what her estimate is of the cost of *(a)* ministerial cars and drivers and *(b)* taxis for her Department in each of the last two years. [202371]

Ms Hewitt: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply given him by the Minister at the Cabinet Office on 10 January 2005, *Official Report*, columns 85–86W.

Employment Status Review

Mr. Grogan: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when she expects to publish a response to the review of employment status in relation to statutory employment rights. [208030]

Mr. Sutcliffe: We hope to publish a Government response to the Employment Status Review this year.

Equal Pay

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when her target for 35 per cent. of large organisations to have completed a pay review by 2006 in connection with equal pay was set; what her estimate is of the percentage of large organisations which had undertaken or commenced such reviews by the end of 2004; and if she will make a statement. [208778]

Ms Hewitt: The target was agreed as part of the 2002 Spending Review.

The EOC's report "Monitoring Progress on Equal Pay Reviews" in spring 2004, showed that by November 2003, 15 per cent. of large employers had carried out an EPR, 10 per cent. were in the process of conducting one, and a further 26 per cent. were planning to do one. If those employers planning to carry out an EPR actually do so, it will mean that around 45 per cent. of large employers should either have completed an EPR, or be in the process of conducting one, by the end of 2004. These findings suggest that our target for 35 per cent. of large organisations to have done an EPR by 2006 will be achieved.

There is now a toughened target of 45 per cent. of large organisations to have undertaken pay reviews by April 2008, which was agreed as part of the 2004 Spending Review.

Iraq (Reconstruction Contracts)

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will list the contracts won by UK firms since March 2003 for the reconstruction of Iraq, indicating the value of the contract in each case. [207772]

Ms Hewitt *[holding answer 13 January 2005]*: British companies are not obliged to give details of contracts won and there is no central organisation that publishes such information. We estimate that, to date, British companies are involved in contracts for reconstruction and other work in Iraq to the value of around US$2.6 billion. British companies are active in the power, water, banking, ports, construction, telecoms, security, legal services and consultancy sectors.

Lie Detectors

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what advice has been given to Ministers in her Department on the use of lie detectors in assessing coal health compensation claims; and if she will place a copy of such advice in the Library; [207870]

(2) whether lie detectors for possible use in assessing coal health compensation claims have been tested on Ministers. [207871]

(3) what assessment she has made of the merits of using *(a)* random sampling and *(b)* volunteer sampling as part of use of lie detectors in coal health compensation claims; [207873]

(4) whether her Department has plans to use lie detectors in coalminers' compensation claims. [207874]

Nigel Griffiths: I refer the hon. Member to the replies I gave the hon. Member for Barnsley and Penistone on 10 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 145W.

Mail Preference Service

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what forms of redress are open to an individual who expresses a preference under the mail preference service but then receives junk mail addressed to the householder. [207882]

Mr. Sutcliffe: If an individual is receiving unsolicited mailings despite their registration with the mailing preference service (MPS) they can raise the matter with MPS complaint handling service who will investigate the matter with the company concerned. If the mailing was a breach of the British Codes of Advertising and Sales Promotion then they will pass the complaint to the Advertising Standards Authority for action.

National Institute for Medical Research

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the reasons are for the closure of the National Institute for Medical Research; and what her assessment is of the implications for the development of malaria vaccines in the UK. [205424]

Ms Hewitt: There are no plans to close the National Institute for Medical Research (NIMR). The Medical Research Council is considering options presented by the NIMR Task Force which was set up to consider the future of NIMR in the context of continuing to support the best basic and translational research. At present, there are no specific implications for the support of research into malaria.

National Minimum Wage

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessments she has made of the effects of the national minimum wage on wage rates in the Greater London area. [206192]

Mr. Sutcliffe: We have asked the Low Pay Commission to consider all aspects of the minimum wage and expect to receive their 2005 report next month.

Pay Television Subscriptions

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many pay television subscriptions the Department had in each year since 1997; and what the cost was in each year. [207656]

Ms Hewitt: This information is not centrally recorded and can be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Post Office

Ms Atherton: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether contracts for Post Office Counters to be transferred to private companies can be agreed before the public consultation is completed. [207988]

Mr. Sutcliffe: This is a commercial matter that falls within the day-today responsibility of Post Office Ltd. I have therefore asked the Chief Executive to reply direct to the hon. Member.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what appeal mechanism exists once the Post Office has made a decision to close a post office branch. [205602]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Consultation and decisions on proposed post office closures are an operational matter for Post Office Ltd. and are considered in accordance with the 'Code of Practice on Post Office Closures and Relocations' agreed by Post Office Ltd. and Postwatch.

Post Office Ltd. and Postwatch have agreed an 'escalation' procedure for handling closure proposals under the urban network reinvention programme where Postwatch strongly oppose a closure. Cases are escalated for consideration at senior levels up to and including the Chief Executive of Post Office Ltd. and the Chairman of Postwatch.

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many post offices have closed in Wales in each year from 1996 to 2004. [208833]

Mr. Sutcliffe: I am advised by Post Office Ltd that data on post office closures is not available in the form requested. However it has produced quarterly statistics on post office closures by Government region/country since March 2000 and the net closure figures for Wales are:

Year to end March	*Number*
2001	68
2002	26
2003	18
2004	73
2005[1]	45

[1] First quarter only.

Renewable Obligation Certificates

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans she has to revise renewable obligation certificates to distinguish between low, high and premium value renewables. [207305]

Ms Hewitt: The on-going Renewables Obligation Review does not anticipate bringing forward such a change as the Government remains of the view that the principal purpose of the Obligation should be to stimulate investment in the more economic forms of renewables generation so that our renewables target may be achieved at least cost. The Government's approach is to bolster the support from the Obligation with capital grants for those technologies further from market.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) whether departmental special advisers have been responsible for authorising instances of departmental spending since May 1997; [203922]

(2) whether departmental special advisers have given instructions to permanent civil servants without the explicit authorisation of Ministers since May 1997. [203962]

Ms Hewitt: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply given him by the Minister at the Cabinet Office, *Official Report*, column 1258–59W.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on how many occasions between 31 March 2002 and 31 March 2003 her special advisers travelled abroad in an official capacity; what places were visited; and how much each visit cost. [207165]

Ms Hewitt: Between 31 March 2002 and 31 March 2003, special advisers in the Department of Trade and Industry have travelled abroad on official business on five occasions, (to New York, Washington, and Brussels) at an average cost to the Department of £498 per trip.

All travel by special advisers is undertaken fully in accordance with the rules set out in the Ministerial Code and the Civil Service Management Code, copies of which are available in the Library of the House.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether departmental special advisers have written to external *(a)* bodies and *(b)* individuals in their official capacity since May 1997. [204296]

Ms Hewitt: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply given him by the Minister for the Cabinet Office on 14 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1004W.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether departmental special advisers have made appearances before parliamentary Select Committees in their official capacity since May 1997. [204316]

Ms Hewitt: None have done so.

Written Answers to Questions

Wednesday 19 January 2005

PRIME MINISTER

Tsunami

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Prime Minister what discussions he has had with the Indian Prime Minister on the effects of the recent tsunami in India; [208891]

The Prime Minister: I have had no discussions with the Indian Prime Minister on the tsunami. Officials have of course been in contact with their Indian counterparts.

CABINET OFFICE

Civil Service Property

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many items of civil service property within her Department are unaccounted for, broken down by type. [205583]

Mr. Miliband: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 17 January 2005, *Official Report*, column. 769W.

External Suppliers

John Mann: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many tenders were let by his Department to external suppliers in financial year 2003–04; and what the value was. [209114]

Mr. Miliband: The information on contracts awarded by the Cabinet Office cannot be obtained in the format required without incurring disproportionate costs.

Stolen Property

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many civil servants from the Cabinet Office have *(a)* faced disciplinary proceedings as a result of allegations of theft, *(b)* been charged with theft and *(c)* been dismissed following theft allegations in each year since 1997. [206403]

Mr. Miliband: No Cabinet Office civil servants faced disciplinary proceedings or were charged or dismissed following theft during the period 1998–2004.

No information is available for 1997.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

CPS Prosecutions

Mr. Amess: To ask the Solicitor-General how many cases were referred to Essex Crown Prosecution Service in each year from 2000; and in how many cases a decision to prosecute was made. [206934]

The Solicitor-General: The following table shows the numbers of defendants' files submitted to CPS for the relevant years together with the total numbers of defendants prosecuted by CPS Essex.

	Number of defendants' files submitted by police to CPS Essex	*Number of defendants prosecuted by CPS Essex*
2000	24,173	25,761
2001	28,046	26,440
2002	34,765	26,931
2003	35,761	27,570
2004 (to September 2004)	34,321	21,977

The number of cases completed in any one year is unlikely to match the number received as incomplete cases are carried over, and dealt with, in subsequent years.

Iraq

Llew Smith: To ask the Solicitor-General how many requests the Attorney-General's office has received to date for the Attorney-General's advice to Government, and its preceding iterations, on the legality of invading Iraq. [208239]

The Solicitor-General: As at 18 January 2005, the Legal Secretariat to the Law Officers has received 18 requests under the Freedom of Information Act for the advice given by the Attorney-General on the legality of the use of force against Iraq and related documents.

SCOTLAND

Departmental Costs

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what the cost of refurbishments in his Department was in each year since 1997; and what the planned expenditure is for 2005–06. [205675]

Mrs. McGuire: The Scotland Office was established on 1 July 1999. No refurbishment projects have been undertaken from that date and there is no planned expenditure for 2005–06.

There is an essential maintenance programme currently under way at Dover House, the Scotland Office headquarters building in London.

Departmental Credit Cards

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many credit cards for official expenditure are held by his Department. [206436]

Mrs. McGuire: None.

Sickness Absence

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many days sick leave were taken by civil servants in the Department in each year since 1997; and what the sickness absence rate was in each year. [204515]

Mrs. McGuire: The Scotland Office was established on 1 July 1999.

Details of sick leave and absence rates for the Scotland Office are contained in "Analysis of Sickness Absence in the Civil Service 2003" published by the Cabinet Office. The publication of the 2003 report was announced by written ministerial statement on 1 November 2004, *Official Report*, 1WS, copies of which were placed in the Libraries of the House.

The Scotland Office is committed to managing sickness absence effectively and to putting in place the recommendations of the recently published "Managing Sickness Absence in the Public Sector".

Staff Gyms

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many gyms are available to the staff in the Department; and what the cost of providing them was in the last year for which figures are available. [204369]

Mrs. McGuire: Staff of the Scotland Office have access to facilities in the buildings of the Department for Constitutional Affairs and the Scottish Executive. There is no cost to the Office for the use of these facilities.

Working Time Regulations

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many officials working in ministerial private offices in the Department have worked more than a 48-hour week at any time in the last 12 months for which figures are available; how many of those had signed a waiver under Working Time Regulations; and what percentage these figures represented of the total in each case. [204137]

Mrs. McGuire: The Working Time Regulations provide workers with the protection of a limit of an average of 48 hours a week working time over a fixed period, normally 17 weeks. Managers in the Scotland Office monitor staff working to identify those who may be close to or surpassing these limits but weekly records of hours worked are not routinely retained. No ministerial private office staff in the Office have signed a waiver under the Working Time Regulations.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Film Industry

Mr. Etherington: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what support the Government are offering the film industry in the North East. [209534]

Estelle Morris: In 2004–05, the Government-funded UK Film Council provided £400,000 grant in aid support to Northern Film and Media (NFM), the Regional Screen Agency for the North East. NFM also received £390,000 of Lottery funding. This money, together with contributions from other funding agencies, was spent on promoting and building a vibrant and sustainable moving image industry in the North East.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport whether the contracts signed by her special advisers differ from the Model Contract for Special Advisers. [207275]

Mr. Caborn: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to him by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister on 17 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 753W.

WALES

Emergency Services

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what discussions he has had with the National Assembly for Wales Government on proposals for changes to emergency services provision in Wales. [209934]

Mr. Touhig: I discuss a wide range of issues with Assembly Ministers, including the emergency services.

Homelessness

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many homeless households on average were in *(a)* temporary accommodation and *(b)* bed and breakfast accommodation in Wales in each year from 1990–91 to the establishment of the National Assembly for Wales. [207968]

Mr. Touhig: The information requested is shown in the following table.

Homeless households accommodated temporarily on 31 December [1,2]

	Bed and breakfast	*All types of temporary accommodation*
1990[3]	141	1,011
1991	242	1,214
1992	248	1,032
1993[4]	108	764
1994	64	611
1995	62	548
1996	86	509
1997	78	692
1998	69	846
1999	69	850

[1] 1990–96 data relate to the period when cases of homelessness were dealt with under the Housing Act 1985

[2] From 1997 onwards cases are dealt with under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996. Households found to be eligible unintentionally homeless and in priority need.

[3] Figures exclude the estimated 2,000 households made homeless in Colwyn as a result of the major flooding incident in February 1990, for whom no breakdown by action of local authority is available.

[4] Figures exclude the estimated 237 households made homeless in Aberconwy as a result of the flooding incident in Llandudno during June 1993, for whom no breakdown by action of local authority is available

Source:
Welsh Office/Welsh Assembly WHO12 returns number

Ministerial Engagements

Mr. Gummer: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list the Ministerial engagements *(a)* out of London and *(b)* in London that he has cancelled since 1 January 2004. [209229]

Mr. Hain: There is no record kept of cancelled engagements in Wales Office Ministers' diaries. When engagements have had to be cancelled, wherever possible we try to re-instate them at a later date. All engagements are subject to ministerial and parliamentary business.

Swimming Pools

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many public swimming pools there are in Wales. [208792]

Mr. Touhig: In November 2004 there were 129 public swimming pools in Wales.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Apiculture

Sir Paul Beresford: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what effect she expects the removal of Varroosis from the list of notifiable diseases to have on the health of *(a)* feral and *(b)* non-feral colonies of bees. [208365]

Alun Michael: Removing Varroosis from the list of notifiable diseases is not expected to have any significant impact on bee health as the disease has been endemic in the UK for several years.

Sir Paul Beresford: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her assessment is of the state of the honey industry in the UK; and how she expects it to change in the next five years. [208367]

Alun Michael: In recent years, the value of honey production in the UK has fluctuated between £10 million and £35 million per annum. Production has ranged between 3,000 and 7,500 tonnes per annum. The contribution of the honey industry to the agricultural economy is difficult to measure since productivity depends on a range of factors. But, subject to the influence of environmental conditions, such as the weather and available flora, bee health and the interest in the craft of beekeeping, no marked change is expected in the next five years.

Sir Paul Beresford: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what she estimates to be the contribution made by the beekeeping industry to the agricultural economy; and what assessment she has made of how it will be affected by the proposed cut in the budget of the National Bee Unit for 2005–06. [208368]

Alun Michael: An independent assessment, undertaken in 2001, estimated the value of beekeeping in England to the agricultural economy at around £120 million per annum. The proposed reduction in Defra's budget for the National Bee Unit will not apply until 2008. We are working with beekeeping associations to minimise any risks associated with this.

Bird Population

Dr. Pugh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent reports the Department has assessed relating to the reduction in the number of species of birds in the United Kingdom and the implications for the bird population of the United Kingdom. [207868]

Mr. Bradshaw: Defra annually monitors the numbers of a whole range of birds, through the breeding bird survey. This survey, conducted and funded jointly by the British Trust for Ornithology, the RSPB and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee, assesses trends in the numbers of common species of birds across the country. A range of other surveys, funded by these organisations, assesses trends in scarcer species. Annual reports are produced for each of the surveys, but summary information derived from them is contained in the report "The State of the UK's Birds 2003"[1], which was published in July 2004.

This report revealed:

> The UK wild bird indicator, a barometer of the fortunes of breeding birds in the UK, for all species showed a slight decline between 2000 and 2002, but has stayed relatively stable since the early 1980s.
>
> Continuing decreases in species such as the lesser spotted woodpecker, willow tit and wood warbler.
>
> Considerable mixed fortunes in the trends in commoner breeding birds with decreases in populations of turtle doves, corn buntings, house sparrows and starlings, but short term increases in tree sparrows, stone chats and kingfishers.

The report recognised encouraging progress towards meeting species' targets in the UK biodiversity action plan where concerted conservation action has resulted in increases in numbers of bitterns, corncrakes, stone-curlews and cirl buntings—all species that were at serious risk of extinction as recently as the mid-1990s. Whilst there is no reason for complacency, indications are that the dramatic rate of long-term decline in overall bird populations may have been halted.

[1] Eaton M.A., Noble D.G., Cranswick P.A., Carter N., Wotton S., Ratcliffe N., Wilson A., Hilton G.M., and Gregory R.D., 2004. *The State of the UK's Birds 2003*. BTO, the RSPB and WWT, Sandy.

BSE

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list countries in which there are confirmed cases of BSE; and whether export controls have been put in place *(a)* voluntarily and *(b)* compulsorily in each case. [208267]

Mr. Bradshaw: The following countries have reported confirmed cases of BSE in indigenous cattle.

EU member states

UK
Italy
Austria
Luxembourg
Belgium
Netherlands
Denmark
Portugal
Finland
Spain
France
Czech Republic

Germany
Poland
Greece
Slovakia
Ireland
Slovenia

Non-EU countries

Switzerland
Liechtenstein
Canada
Israel
Japan

In addition, one case identified in the USA was imported from Canada.

Portugal and the UK have had an export ban imposed by EU law as a result of a high incidence of BSE. The ban on exports of cattle and their products from Portugal was lifted in December last year following the satisfactory demonstration by the Portuguese authorities to the EU Commission of adequate BSE controls and reduced BSE incidence. We have not been notified of any voluntary export controls by any of the countries listed.

Burnside Farm

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on what date a Government Minister was first informed of the existence of the video of Burnside Farm taken by Northumberland Trading Standards on 24 February 2001. [200215]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 29 November 2005]:* My noble Friend the Under-Secretary and my hon. Friend, the Minister of State saw extracts of the video when they were shown widely in the television news media at the time of Robert Waugh's trial in May 2002. The video was brought to Ministers' attention again as a result of the recent interest in it that was generated by pig swill campaigners.

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether her Department possessed a copy of the video of Burnside Farm taken by Northumberland Trading Standards on 24 February 2001; and when the decision not to provide the video to the Anderson Inquiry was taken. [200217]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 29 November 2005]:* Defra has no record of being sent a copy of the video by Northumberland county council before February 2003. The report of the Lessons to be Learned Inquiry, chaired by Dr. Iain Anderson, was published on 22 July 2002. Eye-witness evidence collected at Burnside Farm at the same time as the video was taken was provided to the Anderson Inquiry.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) whether *(a)* Ministers and *(b)* officials in the (i) Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and (ii) her Department had been informed of the existence of the (A) James Dring Report, (B) Northumberland Trading Standards video and report, (C) scientific test samples sent to Pirbright and (D) results of those test samples, in respect of the Burnside Farm, Heddon-on-the-Wall, foot and mouth disease outbreak in 2001, (1) prior to and (2) during the period of the Dr. Iain Anderson FMD Inquiry in 2001–02; [202036]

(2) whether the *(a)* James Dring Report, *(b)* Northumberland Trading Standards video and report, *(c)* scientific test samples sent to Pirbright and *(d)* results of those test samples in respect of the Burnside Farm, Heddon-on-the-Wall, foot and mouth disease outbreak in 2001 were (i) supplied to the Chairman of the Lessons to be Learned Inquiry in 2001 and (ii) the subject of minuted informal meetings in (A) the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and (B) her Department in (1) 2001 and (2) 2002; [202037]

(3) what assessment was made of the suitability of the *(a)* James Dring Report, *(b)* Northumberland Trading Standards video and report, *(c)* scientific test samples sent to Pirbright and *(d)* results of those test samples in respect of the Burnside Farm, Heddon-on-the-Wall, foot and mouth disease outbreak in 2001, to be forwarded to Dr Iain Anderson for his inquiry in 2001–02. [202038]

Mr. Bradshaw: Ministers were briefed about and had access to Mr. Dring's personal statement in the week beginning 8 March 2004. Officials knew about Mr. Dring's statement prior to and during the period of the FMD 2001: Lessons to be Learned Inquiry, chaired by Dr. Iain Anderson

Mr. Dring's personal statement was not submitted to the Lessons to be Learned Inquiry, as there was concern that the contents would have been prejudicial to Mr. Waugh's trial at which Mr. Dring was a witness of fact, rather than an expert witness, had the statement received publicity beforehand. The contemporaneous notes of Mr. Dring's visits to Burnside were given to Dr. Anderson. Mr. Dring also contributed fully to the investigations on the origins of the foot-and mouth (FMD) outbreak 2001, submitted by the then Chief Veterinary Officer to the Inquiry. This Origins of FMD report was based on wide-ranging evidence and rigorous investigation and was published by Dr. Anderson. Defra has no record of minutes of informal meetings being made or submitted to the inquiry.

Ministers and Dr. Anderson have said it was regrettable that the Mr. Dring's statement was not sent to the inquiry. However, Dr. Anderson has stated that had he seen Mr. Dring's statement at that time it would not have changed any conclusions or recommendations of his inquiry.

The circumstances surrounding Mr. Dring's visit to Burnside Farm were discussed with the Lessons Learned Inquiry Team on 4 March 2002; a note of the meeting was also published by Dr. Anderson.

Defra has known about the video since it was first being made in so far as a Veterinary Officer was present on Burnside Farm on 24 February 2001, when filming took place. We have no record of Ministers being expressly informed of the existence of the video until recently. The Under-Secretary became aware of the video when extracts were shown in the television news media at the time of Robert Waugh's trial in May 2002. It was brought to Ministers' attention again as a result of the media and parliamentary interest in the video that was generated by the *Farmers Weekly* in October this year. I am not aware of any associated report written by Northumberland county council.

The report of the FMD 2001: Lessons to be Learned Inquiry, chaired by Dr. Iain Anderson, was published on 22 July 2002. Defra has no record of being sent a copy of the video by Northumberland county council before February 2003. Northumberland county council did not release any copies of the video before the trial of Mr. Waugh in May 2002, after Dr. Anderson had stopped receiving evidence for his Lessons to be Learned Inquiry.

Officials were aware made aware of the scientific tests results on the samples taken at Burnside Farm, as soon they were available, resulting in Defra confirming disease on Burnside farm on 23 February. Details of the samples and the results of the tests are set out in the Origins of FMD report submitted to the Anderson Inquiry.

As set out in the Origins of FMD report, samples were taken at Burnside Farm on 22 February, which included epithelium samples from two pigs and 20 blood samples taken from other pigs on the premises. On 24 February further sampling was carried out when FMD experts from the Institute for Animal Health, Pirbright and an epidemiological team from Defra visited the farm. 88 per cent. of the 241 pigs blood sampled on that day were seropositive for FMD Type O antibodies.

I would also refer the hon. Member to the statement I made on 13 December about the video of Burnside Farm.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when her Department first received *(a)* a video and *(b)* other documentary evidence from Northumberland Trading Standards Department in respect of the 2001 foot and mouth disease outbreak at Heddon-on-the-Wall. [202040]

Mr. Bradshaw: Defra has no record of being sent a copy of the video by Northumberland county council before February 2003. We have not received any other documentary evidence from the council.

Civil Service Property

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many items of civil service property within her Department are unaccounted for, broken down by type. [205569]

Alun Michael: The information supplied within the following tables does not include property lost or stolen from executive agencies. Data are only available from 2001–02, as the Department did not exist prior to that year.

In addition to the data given here, a number of cage traps have been damaged or lost as a result of action by animal right activists, and the calculated value since 2001–02 amounts to about £60,000.

The three attached tables comprise a summary sheet for the three years since the Department's inception supported by a workings sheet and detailed inventory of individual items.

Summary of items stolen or lost for years 2001–04

	Quantity			*Amount (£)*		
	2001–02	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
Items categorised as stolen						
Laptop	4	6	2	6,691	10,221	1,151
Mobile phone	6	1	0	441	40	0
PCs3	4	1	3,332	6,208	1,916	
Monitors	0	6	0	0	4,004	0
Projectors	0	2	0	0	5,160	0
Pressure washers	0	3	0	0	2,885	0
Digital camera	0	2	0	0	700	0
Total	13	24	3	10,464	29,218	3,067
Items categorised as lost						
Laptop	6	3	1	10,301	4,465	1,664
Mobile phone	2	5	0	180	740	0
PCs	0	2	0	0	647	0
Projectors	1	0	0	300	0	0
Scanner	0	1	0	0	200	0
Global positioning unit	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fax modem	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dictaphone	21	3	0	3,936	280	0
Pressure washers	1	0	1	1,586	0	2,624
Protective clothing	0	1	0	0	57	0
Burn site equipment	1	0	0	1,422	0	0
Total	32	15	2	17,725	6,389	4,288
Combined total of items stolen or lost						
Laptop	10	9	3	16,992	14,686	2,815
Mobile phone	8	6	0	621	780	0
PCs	3	6	1	3,332	6,855	1,916
Pressure washers	1	3	1	1,586	2,885	2,624

Summary of items stolen or lost for years 2001–04

	Quantity			*Amount (£)*		
	2001–02	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
Monitors	0	6	0	0	4,004	0
Projectors	1	2	0	300	5,160	0
Scanners	0	1	0	0	200	0
Digital camera	0	2	0	0	700	0
Fax modem	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dictaphone	21	3	0	3,936	280	0
Global positioning unit	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protective clothing	0	1	0	0	57	0
Burn site equipment	1	0	0	1,422	0	0
Total	45	39	5	28,189	35,607	7,355

Items stolen or lost analysed by year and category

Category/Item	*Item*	*Quantity*
2001–02		
Theft		
Laptop	4	6,690.32
Mobile Phones	6	441.35
PC Hardrive	1	800.00
PC Viewer	1	2,173.75
PC	1	358.16
Loss		
Laptop	6	10,301.30
Mobile Phones	4	297.50
Projector	1	300.00
Pressure Hose & Fittings	1	1,586.25
Burn Site Equipment	1	1,421.75
Dictaphones	21	3,936.00
Cage traps	Unknown	26,046.00
2002–03		
Theft		
Laptop	6	10,221.00
Mobile Phones	1	40.00
Digital Camera	2	700.00
PCs	2	2,620.00
PC Base Unit	1	587.50
IT equipment	1	3,000.00
Monitors	6	4,004.40
Projectors	2	5,160.00
Pressure washers	3	2,885.00
Loss		
Laptop	3	4,464.59
Mobile Phones	5	740.00
PC	2	647.00
Scanner	1	200.00
Dictaphones	3	280.00
Protective clothing	1	57.58
2003–04		
Theft		
Laptop	2	1,151.44
IT equipment	1	1,916.00
Loss		
Laptop	1	1,1663.72
Diesel Pressure Washer	1	2,623.78
Cage Traps	1,013	34,188.75
Total		38,476.25

Inventory of items stolen or lost for years 2001–04

Category	*Item*	*Amount (£)*
2001–02		
Theft	Psion	358.16
Theft	Two Mobile phones	96.35
Theft	Cage traps	—
	Binoculars	—
	GPS	—
	Pager	26,046
Theft	PC Hard Drive	800
Loss	Two laptops	2,060.26
Theft	Projector and Laptop	1,578
Theft	Laptop	1,933.32
Loss[1]	Four laptops	241.04
Theft	Laptop	1679
Theft	PC viewer	2,173.75
Loss	Pressure hose and fittings	1,586.25
Loss	FMD burn site	1,421.75
Theft	Mobile phone	120
Theft	Phone	25
Theft	Mobile phone	100
Loss	Mobile phone	100
Theft	Mobile phone	100
Loss	Mobile phone	80
Theft	Laptop	1,500
Loss	Mobile phone	58.75
Loss	Mobile phone	58.75
Loss	Overhead Projector	300
Loss	Dictaphone	299
Loss	Dictaphone	299
Loss	Dictaphone	86
Loss	Dictaphone	86
Loss	Dictaphone	86
Loss	Dictaphone	86
Loss	Dictaphone	299
Loss	Dictaphone	299
Loss	Dictaphone	299
Loss	Dictaphone	86
Loss	Dictaphone	86
Loss	Dictaphone	86
Loss	Dictaphone	299
Loss	Dictaphone	86
Loss	Dictaphone	86
Loss	Dictaphone	299
Loss	Dictaphone	86
Loss	Dictaphone	299
Loss	Dictaphone	86
Loss	Dictaphone	299
Loss	Dictaphone	299
2002–03		
Theft	Three pressure washers	2,885
Theft	Digital camera	350
Theft	Mobile phone	40
Theft	Digital camera	350

Inventory of items stolen or lost for years 2001–04

Category	*Item*	*Amount (£)*
Loss	Laptop	2,000
Loss	Three mobile phones	360
Theft	PC	447
Loss	Laptop	1,500
Loss	Scanner	200
Theft	Two laptops	3,200
Theft	PC base unit	587.5
Loss	Two monitors	1,334.8
Theft	Mobile phone	300
Theft	Laptop	342
Theft	Laptop	1,815
Loss	Laptop	2,764
Theft	Laptop	1,264.59
Theft	Four monitors	2,669.6
Theft	Two projectors	5,160
Loss	Laptop	1,800
Theft	Mobile phone	80
Theft	Two PCs	2,620
Loss	Computer equipment	3,000
Theft	PC	200
Loss	Protective clothing	57.58
Loss[2]	Rabies van	2,500
Loss	Three Dictaphones	280
2003–04		
Theft	Laptop	56.96
Loss	Laptop	1,663.72
Theft	IT equipment	1,916
Loss	Diesel pressure washer	2,623.78
Loss	1013 Cage traps	34,188.75
Theft	Laptop	1,094.48

[1] Not delivered.

[2] Damage

Correspondence

Sir Michael Spicer: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when the hon. Member for Scunthorpe will reply to the letter of 1 September 2004 from the hon. Member for West Worcestershire. [207980]

Mr. Morley: I responded to the hon. Member on 12 January 2005.

Environmental Sustainability Index

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs where the UK ranks in the Environmental Sustainability Index; and what the rankings are of other EU countries. [208224]

Mr. Morley: The UK ranks 91st in the current 2002 Environmental Sustainability Index. The ranks for other EU countries are shown in the table. We understand that an updated index is to be published by the end of February.

The UK and other countries believe this index is flawed and potentially misleading. It is an aggregated indicator that aims to weigh together many components into a single overall measure of "environmental sustainability", an approach that as yet is not scientifically robust. The choice of the components, and the way in which they are weighted together is largely subjective. A different choice of components or weights would give different results—amply illustrated by the fact that the previous edition of this index, based on a different selection of components, placed the UK 16th. Furthermore, there are still many areas where data are not sufficiently comparable between countries, or are simply not available and have been imputed. It should also be noted that the variables in this index tend to measure circumstances at a single point in time rather than trends or changes, therefore to the extent the index measures anything at all, it is based on the environmental situation which a country faces rather than its progress or performance in improving environmental sustainability.

2002 Environmental sustainability index rankings by EU country

Rank	*Country*	*ESI score*
1	Finland	73.9
3	Sweden	72.6
7	Austria	64.2
10	Latvia	63.0
11	Hungary	62.7
14	Slovakia	61.6
18	Estonia	60.0
23	Slovenia	58.8
27	Lithuania	57.2
28	Portugal	57.1
31	Denmark	56.2
33	France	55.5
34	Netherlands	55.4
37	Ireland	54.8
44	Spain	54.1
50	Germany	52.5
60	Greece	50.9
64	Czech Republic	50.2
84	Italy	47.2
87	Poland	46.7
91	United Kingdom	46.1
125	Belgium	39.1
—	Cyprus	—
—	Luxembourg	—
—	Malta	—

Source:

Global Leaders of Tomorrow Task Force of the World Economic Forum in association with Yale Centre for Environmental Law and Policy and Columbia University www.ciesin.columbia.edu/indicators/ESI.

EU Directives

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list the infrastructure proceedings pending against the UK Government arising from the failure to comply with EU environmental directives, indicating those which relate exclusively to *(a)* England, *(b)* Wales, *(c)* Scotland and *(d)* Northern Ireland. [208417]

Mr. Morley: I assume the hon. Member means infraction proceedings pending against the UK Government. At present there are three cases pending at the European Court of Justice on environmental directives, none of which is related exclusively to England, Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland.

The three cases are:

Directive number	*Nature of the case*
1992/43/EC	Habitats sites list
1992/43/EC	Natural Habitats of wild fauna and flora
1992/43/EC	UK trade in Annex IV species and application of the birds and habitats directive

Food Dumping

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what *(a)* tonnage and *(b)* value of food was dumped by the food industry in landfill sites or incinerated because it had passed the sell-by date in the last year for which figures are available. [208200]

Mr. Morley: The data are not available in the form requested. The Government are currently consulting on a waste data strategy, designed to improve the quality of waste data in the interests of all potential users.

The Environment Agency's National Waste Production Survey (NWPS) of 20,000 businesses, conducted in 1998–99, produced the following estimates in respect of food waste:

Sector	*Quantity of waste in tonnes*	*As percentage of food waste produced by the commercial and industrial sectors*	*As percentage of total waste produced by the commercial and industrial sectors*
Retail	253,000	9.77	0.29
Hotels and restaurants	10,000	0.38	0.01
Food, drinks and tobacco	1,939,000	74.89	2.24
Total	2,202,000	85.04	2.54

However these figures only relate to that fraction of the waste that is definitely food. A considerable amount of food waste was also contained within the general and biodegradable category. The Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) estimate that the amount of food waste produced by the hotel and restaurant sector, for example, could be as high as 3 million tonnes per year.

From 1 January 2006 the Animal By-Products Regulation (EC) No 1774/2002 will prohibit the use of landfill for the disposal of former foodstuffs containing material of animal origin which originate in food manufacturing and retail premises. Also, I understand that a number of multiple retailers have voluntary initiatives in place to make use of unsold food products.

The Government support diverting foodstuffs away from landfill and provides funding for various measures that offer value-for-money in terms of diverting waste from landfill.

Food Transportation

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps her Department is taking to reduce food miles. [206814]

Alun Michael: Defra has commissioned research on the impact of food transportation. The report of the study of "The Validity of Food Miles as an Indicator of Sustainable Development" will be published soon. I will write to my hon. Friend to inform him when the report is published.

Defra has also contributed funding, along with other stakeholders, to a Transport 2000 study to model various transport distribution scenarios for a 'basket' of three food products. The study examined whether a shift to sourcing these products more locally would lead to greater or fewer CO_2 emissions in the supply chain overall. Transport 2000 has recently published the results of this work in "Wise Moves—exploring the relationship between food, transport and CO_2".

National Bee Unit

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the proposals outlined in the Haskins Report on the budget of the National Bee Unit; and if she will make a statement. [208002]

Alun Michael: The Haskins Report made no proposals concerning the budget of the National Bee Unit, though this provision was one identified in Defra's Activity Baseline Review as an area where 20 per cent. savings (equivalent to £250,000 p.a.) could be realised from 2008.

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has to change staffing levels at the Central Science Laboratory's National Bee Unit. [209184]

Alun Michael: Staffing levels at the National Bee Unit will be affected by a reduction of 20 per cent. in funding for the Defra bee health programme from 2008. Detailed decisions are a matter for the Central Science Laboratory but we anticipate the reduction will impact most on seasonal bee inspectors.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs for what reason an incorrect answer was given on 9 November to the hon. Member for South-East Cambridgeshire in reply to question 194308 in the last Session of Parliament. [200216]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 29 November 2005]:* Because it was based on the information available at the time. Further investigation revealed that two Defra officials were sent copies of the video by Northumberland county council at the beginning of February 2003. I corrected my answer to question 194008 as soon as I was informed of this in my pursuant answer to the hon. Member on 18 November 2004.

Pesticides

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what sanctions can be used against local authorities which have failed to test private water supplies for pesticides since 1991. [208310]

Mr. Morley: Local authorities have a duty in section 77 Water Industry Act 1991, to keep themselves informed of the wholesomeness and sufficiency of public and private water supplies to premises in their areas.

In addition, authorities have a duty in the Private Water Supplies Regulations 1991 to monitor at prescribed frequencies for pesticides in larger supplies, and to monitor for pesticides in smaller supplies from time to time in order to ascertain and record the extent to which pesticides are present.

The Drinking Water Inspectorate have inspected some local authorities' arrangements for monitoring private water supplies, including collation of information gathered about monitoring for pesticides.

Local authorities are subject to the courts' judicial control. It is for an individual affected to bring proceedings in appropriate circumstances.

An individual can also apply to the Local Government Ombudsman if he or she has an unresolved complaint.

Stray Dog Service

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what research she has recently *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated on the ability of local authorities (i) to fund and (ii) to manage a 24 hour stray dog service, with particular reference to setting the level of fines for breaches of dog control orders. [208336]

Alun Michael: The Local Government Association is currently evaluating the cost to local authorities of assuming sole responsibility for stray dogs, and any transfer of responsibility for dealing with stray dogs at night from the police to local authorities will be accompanied by an appropriate transfer of resources. Local authorities will not be expected to fund additional responsibilities for stray dogs from receipts from fixed penalties issued for breach of dog control orders.

Supermarkets

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much correspondence and of what nature, the Department has received in each of the last three years for which figures are available from producers and suppliers in respect of their relationship with large supermarket companies, with particular reference to contracts and the relationships throughout the supply chain. [208806]

Alun Michael: Over the last three years the Department has received various pieces of correspondence from producers and suppliers on a range of subjects that will have mentioned in various context matters to do with their relations with large supermarket companies. However, the Department does not maintain a record of the amount of such correspondence received.

Timber

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on progress on the Government programme for use of timber products which are legal and sustainably grown. [209377]

Mr. Morley: In July 2000 the Government made a commitment that its central Departments and their executive agencies would seek to purchase their timber and timber products from legal and sustainable sources. Since then the Government has commissioned research and advice on implementing this policy, undertaken consultation with stakeholders, raised the awareness of central Departments, promoted the policy to the wider public sector, published guidance and commenced the development of a central point of expertise on timber (CPET).

The Sustainable Development in Government Reports provide an indication of the progress being made by central Departments in England. The Third Annual Report 2004 reveals that certified products accounted for 71 per cent. of the money spent on construction timber and 78 per cent. of the money spent on manufactured timber products during the financial year 2003–04. Much of the uncertified timber purchased was supplied with some evidence of legal and sustainable sources. For the preceding financial year 2002–03 Departments reported that certified products accounted for approximately 50 per cent. of their spend on all timber products and that there was some evidence that much of the uncertified timber came from legal and sustainable sources.

The CPET is being developed in phases. Phase 1 was completed in November 2004 and provided an assessment of the extent to which five forest certification schemes provide Government buyers with assurance that legal and sustainable timber has been procured. Phase 2 of CPET will provide a help line service for public sector buyers and their suppliers. A pilot scheme is currently in operation and will provide information that will assist the Government in developing a full service. The Government expects the Phase 2 Help Line service to be operational before autumn 2005.

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will incorporate social criteria involving impacts on indigenous forest people into official programmes for responsible timber use. [209378]

Mr. Morley: The Government's timber procurement policy is aimed, in part, at helping to improve the well being of forest dependent peoples throughout the world. The Government is asking its timber suppliers to provide independent verification that their timber was legally harvested and preferably grown in well-managed forests. In many producing countries the forest laws will help to protect indigenous people's rights, customs and livelihoods. The application of certification scheme standards and equivalent standards that provide assurance of sustainable forest management will add to that protection in many instances.

The Government does not place contractual obligations on its suppliers to take direct action to protect indigenous people because the Government understands that to do so would be in contravention of EU procurement directives. EU procurement law prohibits the specification of criteria that are not strictly relevant to the performance of a contract. Specifications must relate to what is being procured rather than to the people or undertakings that produce what is being procured.

Waste

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what proportion of municipal waste was *(a)* composted, *(b)* recycled and *(c)* sent to incineration facilities in (i) 2000–2001, (ii) 2001–02 and (iii) 2002–03; and what the equivalent figures were for (A) France, (B) Denmark, (C) the Netherlands, (D) Germany and (E) Austria. [206827]

Mr. Morley: The available data are shown as follows.

Municipal waste

	Percentage of municipal waste sent for:		
	Composting	*Recycling*	*Incineration*
2000–01			
United Kingdom	3	8	7
France	11	11	32
Denmark	16	22	53
Netherlands	24	22	31
Germany	15	27	22
Austria	39	24	10
2001–02			
United Kingdom	3	8	7
France	13	12	32
Denmark	14	18	60
Netherlands	23	22	33
Germany	15	27	22
Austria	n/a	n/a	n/a
2002–03			
United Kingdom	4	11	8
France	n/a	n/a	n/a
Denmark	15	19	58
Netherlands	24	21	32
Germany	n/a	n/a	n/a
Austria	n/a	n/a	n/a

n/a = Not available.

Note:

Waste statistics on EU countries are from the Eurostat website which can be accessed through http://europa.eu.int.

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on average, how many kilograms of waste were *(a)* recycled, *(b)* diverted from landfill and *(c)* sent to energy from waste facilities per household in (i) the United Kingdom, (ii) Austria, (iii) Germany, (iv) Denmark and (v) Sweden in the last year for which figures are available. [206843]

Mr. Morley: The latest available data are shown as follows:

		Kilograms of municipal waste per capita		
		Recycled/ composted	*Energy from waste*	*Diverted from landfill*
2002–03	United Kingdom	87	46	120
2000	Austria	368	60	394
2001	Germany	247	0	445
2002	Denmark	231	389	620
2001	Sweden	171	169	343

Notes:

1. Figures are shown per capita which is the usual basis for international comparisons.
2. Waste statistics on EU countries are available from the Eurostat website which can be accessed through http://europa.eu.int.

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she will make an announcement on the operation of the Waste Performance Reward Grant for 2005–06. [209154]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 17 January 2005]:* On 9 December 2004 Defra announced a three-year targeted waste performance and efficiency grant of £260 million to support new and more efficient ways to deliver waste reduction, increase recycling and diversion from landfill. As announced in Defra's five year strategy on 8 December 2004, £5 million of the 2005–06 allocation will focus specifically on local authority incentives for households to recycle and reduce waste. This Grant replaces the waste performance reward grant. Details of the grant, including allocations to individual local authorities, were made available on 9 December, and no further announcements are planned.

Water and Sewerage Services

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the average monthly cost to consumers is of *(a)* water services and *(b)* sewerage services in each water supply area in 2004–05 (i) in total and (ii) broken down by those who were (A) metered and (B) unmetered. [208226]

Mr. Morley: The following table shows the information for both metered and unmetered customers for water and sewerage services broken down by undertaker and in total. The figures are estimates based on forecast data provided to Ofwat by companies.

2004–05	*Unmeasured water*	*Measured water*	*Total water*	*Unmeasured sewerage*	*Measured sewerage*	*Total sewerage*
Water and sewerage companies						
Anglian	11.67	8.54	9.99	16.46	12.07	14.10
Dwr Cymru	11.08	6.95	10.29	15.04	7.95	13.61
North West	11.29	10.03	11.08	11.72	10.71	11.54
Northumbrian (incl. Essex and Suffolk)	9.72	8.09	9.38	11.10	9.79	10.96
Northumbrian	8.58	7.25	8.43	—	—	—
Essex and Suffolk	12.04	8.50	10.80	—	—	—
Severn Trent	10.11	8.37	9.69	8.88	8.27	8.74
South West	12.57	8.30	10.64	23.97	14.28	19.45
Southern	7.85	7.14	7.66	14.75	11.43	13.92
Thames	9.51	8.47	9.30	8.11	7.92	8.07
Wessex	11.42	8.44	10.44	13.39	10.18	12.51
Yorkshire (incl. York)	10.14	8.36	9.67	11.03	8.79	10.44
Yorkshire	10.28	8.41	9.77	—	—	—
York	7.30	5.67	7.10	—	—	—

2004–05	*Unmeasured water*	*Measured water*	*Total water*	*Unmeasured sewerage*	*Measured sewerage*	*Total sewerage*
Water only companies						
Bournemouth and W. Hampshire	9.56	7.21	8.69	—	—	—
Bristol	9.27	8.62	9.12	—	—	—
Cambridge	8.35	7.44	7.86	—	—	—
Dee Valley	10.03	6.57	8.90	—	—	—
Folkestone and Dover	13.17	9.93	11.88	—	—	—
Mid Kent	11.60	9.32	10.86	—	—	—
Portsmouth	6.40	6.98	6.42	—	—	—
South East	11.32	9.52	10.80	—	—	—
South Staffs	7.73	7.38	7.68	—	—	—
Sutton and East Surrey	10.82	8.81	10.45	—	—	—
Tendring Hundred	16.61	11.49	13.49	—	—	—
Three Valleys (incl. North Surrey)	10.34	7.64	9.69	—	—	—
Three Valleys	10.41	7.79	9.81	—	—	—
North Surrey	9.95	7.02	9.08	—	—	—

DEFENCE

Army

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the size of the army will be after the proposed re-organisation; and what it was in 1997. [208418]

Mr. Hoon: The strength of the Army, including the Gurkhas, will remain broadly as it is today at around 103,500 until full normalisation is achieved in Northern Ireland, when we expect it to reduce to around 102,000.

The corresponding figure for April 1997 was 101,360.

British Military Bases (US Missiles)

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make it his policy to require prior parliamentary approval of the placement of US interceptor missiles within British military bases. [207210]

Mr. Hoon: There has been no request from the United States Government to base interceptor missiles anywhere in the United Kingdom. It has not been the practice of successive administrations to seek parliamentary approval for decisions of this type. The Government would in any case seek to ensure that Parliament had adequate opportunity for debate on issues relating to missile defence.

Cyprus

Donald Anderson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list *(a)* retained sites in Cyprus which the United Kingdom has returned since the written answer of 16 January 1995, *Official Report*, column 373W and *(b)* the location and function of each remaining retained site in Cyprus. [208428]

Mr. Caplin *[holding answer 17 January 2005]*: The Larnaca bombing range is the only site that has been returned to the Republic of Cyprus since January 1995. This is identified as Serial B.8 on page 29 of the 1960 treaty documents, copies of which are available in the Library of the House.

The location and function of the remaining retained sites are as follows:

Serial	*Treaty designation*	*Location*	*Requirement*
1	A2	Troodos	RAF Troodos signal station
2	A3	Olympus	Mount Olympus radar station
3	A4 (part)	Zygi	Foreign Office Wireless Station
4	A9	Famagusta	Joint Services Port Unit. Not currently used as in Turkish Occupied Area
5	A10/1	Nicosia	RAF Nicosia Airfield and Camps. Not currently used by British Forces Cyprus (BFC) as located within Green Line. Some facilities used by UN
6	A10/2	Nicosia	Borehole and Easements providing water supply to RAF Nicosia. Not currently used by BFC as located within Green Line
7	BI/2	Limassol	Berengaria water pipeline from Harakis borehole—see Serials 9 and 10
8	C1	Troodos	Troodos Leave Camp. Contiguous to Serial 1. The accommodation is used by BFC, visiting troops and youth services in support of adventurous training. Site also contains married-quarters, NAAFI and Works Unit
9	C2/1	Limassol	Berengaria Village married quarters—see Serials 7 and 10
10	C2/2	Limassol	Harakis borehole for Berengaria Village—see Serials 7 and 9
11	C5	Kissousa	The Kissousa water source provides a water supply for the Akrotiri Sovereign Base Area
12	C8/1	Famagusta	Families Shop and NAAFI HQ. Not currently used as in Turkish Occupied Area
13	C8/3	Famagusta	NAAFI Transport Yard. Not currently used as in Turkish Occupied Area.

David Axon

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence under what regulations Commander David Axon was removed from HMS Somerset in November 2004; what charges were laid against him; what procedures were adopted to hear and adjudicate on these charges; and what actions were taken as a result. [208753]

Mr. Caplin: Commander David Axon was removed from command of HMS Somerset in December 2004 under regulation BR 8373, Article 2026, following allegations which constituted a breach of equal opportunities policy.

The findings and recommendations of the investigation were considered and acted upon in accordance with the procedures defined within BR 8373, Articles 2027 and 2028.

Commander Axon has now been re-appointed to a non-command post ashore.

Dolphins

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether dolphins have been *(a)* used and *(b)* kept by the UK armed forces since 1975. [209470]

Mr. Caplin: No.

Meteor Jet

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether a decision has been made on the future of the remaining Meteor jet at Llanbedr airfield. [208794]

Mr. Caplin: Yes. The Ministry of Defence's Disposal Services Agency sold the aircraft by competitive tender in November 2004 to Everett Engineers of Sproughton, Ipswich.

Infantry

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence which infantry regiments have the best record of retained manpower in the last 12 months. [208831]

Mr. Caplin: I will write to the hon. Member and place a copy of my letter in the Library of the House.

Iraq

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Territorial Army medical personnel *(a)* have been and *(b)* are deployed in Iraq; and if he will make a statement. [207904]

Mr. Caplin: 1,325 Territorial Army (TA) medical personnel have been called up in support of operations in Iraq, and there are currently 75 TA medical personnel serving in Iraq.

These figures include members of the Royal Army Medical Corps, Royal Army Dental Corps and Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corps.

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence on what date the Iraq Survey Group (ISG) stopped searching for Iraqi weapons of mass destruction; what proportion of the ISG's cost was met by the United Kingdom; and what the total United Kingdom financial commitment, including salaries of British personnel involved, was to the ISG. [209160]

Mr. Hoon: Following the conclusions of the comprehensive report of the special adviser to the Director Central Intelligence published on 30 September 2004, the Iraq Survey Group is no longer conducting an active programme of field investigations into weapons of mass destruction, but it does continue to investigate information relating to WMD as it becomes available.

The net additional cost of activities undertaken by UK personnel attached to the ISG has been met by the UK and is included in the published costs of Operation Telic. It is not possible to identify the net additional costs related solely to the work of the UK personnel in the ISG, or the proportion of total costs met by the UK.

Jake Shrof

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what steps he has taken to investigate allegations of bullying and sexual assault made by former Coldstream Guardsman Jake Shrof. [208386]

Mr. Caplin: An investigation into these allegations was carried out by the Royal Military Police. The resulting report and supporting evidence was considered by the Army Prosecuting Authority who determined that there was insufficient evidence to direct trial by court martial.

Meteorological Office

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has to review the financial resources available to the Meteorological Office; and if he will make a statement. [208875]

Mr. Caplin: The Meteorological Office is a trading fund within the Ministry of Defence. It receives revenue through two main channels.

The Government centrally funds the National Met Programme, which underpins the UK's meteorological capability. The programme and the resources required are agreed annually with the Met Office. The programme and the Met Office's performance is kept under review by an independent group of commissioners who represent the interests of all stakeholder departments. The commissioners report directly to me on a biannual basis, and contribute to the overall financial planning and resource allocation processes in the Ministry of Defence.

It receives the second directly from customers in the public and private sectors, on agreed contractual terms. It is a matter for individual customer departments to keep the funds for their Met Office services under review in the course of normal business.

In addition, the Met Office can if required seek loans or similar types of one-off financial support from the Ministry of Defence, as its parent department.

Private Terence Morrison

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what disciplinary action has been taken against Private Terence Morrison in connection with the attempted murder of a 14-year-old boy in Belfast on 6 November 2004; and in what regiment Private Morrison serves. [208866]

Mr. Caplin: This incident is subject to an investigation by the Police Service of Northern Ireland and it would be inappropriate to comment further. In accordance with data protection legislation, it is not our policy to confirm the unit in which a named individual is serving.

Court Martial (RAF Aldergrove)

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the factors were that influenced his decision to locate at RAF Aldegrove the court martial of six Royal Marine instructors facing assault charges connected with their conduct at Lympstone, Devon. [208857]

Mr. Caplin: The Military Court Centre at Aldergrove was deemed to be the most appropriate venue to accommodate this trial. It is a purpose built courtroom with modern facilities and is sufficiently large enough to handle a trial involving six defendants, their counsel and numerous witnesses.

Sickness Absence

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many days sick leave were taken by civil servants in the Department in each year since 1997; and what the sickness absence rate was in each year. [204511]

Mr. Caplin: The following tables show the numbers of days of sickness absence for non-industrials and industrials in the Ministry of Defence since 1997.

Number of days' sickness absence and the sickness absence rate for non-industrial civil servants in the Ministry of Defence 1997–2003 and financial year 2003–04

	Sickness absence (working days)	*Absence rate*
1997[1]	573,000[3]	[3]8.4
1998[1]	571,000[3]	[3]8.6
1999[2]	538,700[4]	[4]8.1
2000[2]	520,100[4]	[4]7.9
2001[5]	No reliable data available	—
2002[2]	[4]465,200	[4]7.3
2003[2]	[4]481,000	[4]7.6
FY 2003–04[2]	[4]494,100	[4]7.8

[1] Excludes non-industrial Ministry of Defence staff in Trading Funds and Royal Fleet Auxiliaries. Rates are from the Annual Report "Analysis of Sickness Absence in the Civil Service" which is published by the Cabinet Office.

[2] Excludes non-industrial Ministry of Defence staff in Trading Funds and Royal Fleet Auxiliaries. Rates are from UK Defence Statistics 2004 Table 2.35. Excludes obvious outliers.

[3] The number of sickness days' absent is calculated using a staff year, which constitutes 225 working days (365 days less bank holidays, weekends and average annual leave) and corresponds to a full-time employee who has been continuously employed throughout the year. Those employees who have worked for only part of a year will be recorded as having worked a fraction of a staff year. For part-time staff, the staff year figure is based on the number of hours worked as a proportion of full-time hours.

[4] Sickness absence days and rates are based on FTE working days lost. For example, if a part-time employee (working 50 per cent. full-time hours) is sick for seven calendar days, this is five working days lost and 2.5 FTE working days lost.

[5] There is no sickness absence information for non-industrial Ministry of Defence staff available for 2001 for data quality reasons.

Number of days' sickness absence and the sickness absence rate for industrial civil servants in the Ministry of Defence 1997–2003 and financial year 2003–04

	Sickness absence[1] (working days)	*Absence rate[1]*
1997[2]	[P]337,100	[P]13.7
1998[2]	[P]376,800	[P]16.3
1999[3]	320,900	12.9
2000[4]	No reliable data available	—
2001[3]	304,900	14.8
2002[3]	259,700	14.8
2003[3]	209,900	13.5
FY 2003-04[3]	187,100	12.2

[1] Sickness absence days and rates are based on FTE working days lost. For example, if a part-time employee (working 50 per cent. full-time hours) is sick for seven calendar days, this is five working days lost and 2.5 FTE working days lost.

[2] Excludes industrial Ministry of Defence Staff in Trading Funds and Royal Fleet Auxiliaries. Sickness absence records for industrial staff are not as robust as for non-industrial staff and the early years are marked as provisional.

[3] Excludes industrial Ministry of Defence Staff in Trading Funds and Royal Fleet Auxiliaries. Rates are from UK Defence Statistics 2004 Table 2.35. Excludes obvious outliers.

[4] There is no sickness absence information for industrial Ministry of Defence staff available for 2000 for data quality reasons.

Tanzania

Mr. McNamara: : To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many soldiers have participated in adventure training exercises in Tanzania since 10 November 2004; and from which regiments. [208384]

Mr. Ingram: Some nine members of the Light Dragoons participated in adventurous training in Tanzania between 11–16 November 2004. There has been no further adventurous training undertaken by the British Army in the country since that date.

TRANSPORT

Cycling

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps are being taken to promote the integration of rail and cycle travel, with particular reference to off-peak periods; and what mechanisms exist for co-ordinating transport and public health policies in respect of cycling. [208521]

Charlotte Atkins: We expect train operators and Network Rail to encourage bike and rail journeys in order to enable the bicycle to be used as part of a longer journey and to reduce car use. The Strategic Rail Authority (SRA) published their Cycling Policy last year. The policy states that:

> there should be cycle parking at most stations over the next five years, so that 95 per cent. of journeys originate from stations with cycle parking;
>
> train operators should carry bikes at all times, whilst accepting that this will not always be possible during peak periods.

The Department is providing over £500,000 to improve cycle parking at stations where a pressing need has been identified and last year published, with the Countryside Agency, *Bike and Rail—A Good Practice Guide.*

In light of its keen interest in both cycling and walking, the Department has been active in the development of public health policy. Ministers and officials were closely involved in cross-Government consideration of initiatives to raise levels of cycling, leading to commitments on cycle training and cycle commuting in the public health White Paper published in November last year. The Department of Health was also one of a number of Departments which contributed to *Walking and Cycling: an Action Plan,* published by the Department for Transport in June last year. The action plan contains more than 40 actions aimed at increasing cycling and walking, in light of the health, transport and environmental benefits.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the total cost to his Department was for accountancy services in each of the last two years. [202410]

Charlotte Atkins: The departmental costs for accountancy services for the last two years are as follows:

Financial year	*£*
2002–3	13,122,749
2003–4	16,242,636

The above costs include in-house services, outsourced services and bought-in services.

DVLA

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent representations he has received from *(a)* the Local Government Association and *(b)* individual local authorities, urging a reduction in the time taken by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency to contact the last registered owners of vehicles found with no road tax. [208948]

Mr. Jamieson: I am not aware of any such representations.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the average time taken by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency to contact the last registered owners of vehicles found with no road tax was in the last period for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement. [208949]

Mr. Jamieson: The majority of registered keepers of unlicensed vehicles are sent a letter offering them an opportunity to pay an out of court settlement 25 days after the vehicle was sighted on a public road. Generally the vehicle keepers are not contacted before the 25 days to allow for any delayed licence applications to update the vehicle record.

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent assessment has been made of the response times of the *(a)* online and *(b)* telephone renewal system of the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency. [209597]

Mr. Jamieson: DVLA is currently in negotiations with its service providers to develop a process, which will allow the agency to measure the response times of the online service. DVLA is also working on developing a response time report for the telephone renewal system. These arrangements are expected to be in place by early summer.

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many times the *(a)* online service and *(b)* the automatic telephone system at the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency has failed to recognise its relicensing numbers since the system was established. [209598]

Mr. Jamieson: The current relicensing period runs from the fifteenth day of the month in which the current licence expires. If a customer uses their relicensing number prior to the 15th of the month the system will not recognise it as the application has been made too early. Information on the number of times the system failed to recognise the relicensing number is not available.

Operational Improvements (Marlow)

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to the statement by the hon. Member for Staffordshire, Moorlands (Charlotte Atkins) of 11 January 2005, *Official Report,* column 22WH, on operational improvements in Marlow, what assessment he has made of the improvements needed; and if he will make a statement. [209150]

Mr. McNulty *[holding answer 17 January 2005]:* No assessment has been made yet as the line has not been designated as a community railway, but the objective would be to provide greater capacity and flexibility in the operation of the line to Maidenhead.

Railways

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) how many passengers used Maidenhead station in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004, broken down by (i) morning peak hours, (ii) evening peak hours and (iii) off-peak hours; [208500]

(2) how many passengers used Twyford Station in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004, broken down by (i) morning peak hours, (ii) evening peak hours and (iii) off-peak hours. [208502]

Mr. McNulty: Analysis by First Great Western, of tickets sold shows the following passenger journeys to and from both stations to all destinations for the 36 weeks from 1 April 2004 to 11 December 2004. These are based on the train operating company's ticket sales and the numbers of passenger journeys associated with them. Figures for earlier years and for journeys between Twyford and Maidenhead stations are not readily available.

	Total Passenger Journeys	(i) morning peak hours (percentage)	(ii) evening peak hours percentage)	(iii) off-peak hours (percentage)
From Maidenhead	1,494,782			
To Maidenhead	824,604			
Maidenhead Total	2,319,386	32	31	37
From Twyford	649,244			
To Twyford	111,650.			
Twyford Total	760,894	35	30	34

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many representations his Department has received regarding the December timetable changes on routes from Paddington to Maidenhead and Twyford, broken down by *(a)* those in favour of the changes and *(b)* those opposed to the changes. [208511]

Mr. McNulty: Timetable changes on services to and from London Paddington were consulted on by the Strategic Rail Authority in early 2004. The majority of stakeholders recognised the benefits of the overall package of measures. Since that time, available records show the Department for Transport has received one formal representation opposing the changes to timetables on routes from Paddington to Maidenhead and Twyford, along with a small volume of correspondence regarding services on the route more generally.

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what guidelines his Department has issued on the maximum acceptable density of commuter rail passengers measured by number of passengers per square foot. [208510]

Mr. McNulty: The Department has issued no such guidelines. Train operating companies, when calculating capacity for peak period services use a figure of 0.45 sq metres per standing passenger, and any counts which show that they are exceeding this figure will result in the Strategic Rail Authority asking them to look at ways of reducing the passenger loadings on their trains.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he supports the recent proposals put forward to his Department by contractors to open rural stations and halts with short platforms. [208989]

Mr. McNulty: The Department is not aware of any such proposals. In September 2004 the Strategic Rail Authority (SRA) published its "New Stations: A Guide for Promoters", copies of which are in the Library of the House. All proposals for new railway stations will be assessed using the criteria specified in this guide.

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the punctuality of railway service providers. [209429]

Mr. McNulty: Rail Performance Statistics are published quarterly by the Strategic Rail Authority (SRA) in "National Rail Trends". The most recent edition was published in December 2004. Copies of "National Rail Trends" are placed in the House of Commons Library and published on the SRA's website.

The moving annual average of the public performance measure was 81.8 per cent. at 30 September 2004.

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans there are to improve facilities at *(a)* Romford and *(b)* Gidea Park train stations; and if he will make a statement. [209432]

Mr. McNulty: Romford and Gidea Park stations are managed on a day-to-day basis by ONE railway. I understand that ONE are committed to investing £11.3 million in station improvements over the course of the franchise. Details of this spend and their priorities are currently being identified and developed. There are no immediate plans to provide new facilities at these stations.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent assessment he has made of the potential to increase the amount of freight carried on the rail network in the south-east of England; and if he will make a statement. [209563]

Mr. McNulty: The Strategic Rail Authority has considered the key rail freight markets of coal, automotive, metals, petroleum and petroleum products, and general freight in a series of market studies across the UK. These seek to explore underlying trends and forecasted growth in these markets, and have assessed the potential implications and opportunities for rail freight. Summaries of these market studies are published on the SRA freight customer website http://www.railfreightonline.com/news/marketresearch, and will be made available in the Libraries of the House.

A further market research study summary of aggregates is soon to be posted at the same website address, and will be made available in the Libraries of the House.

Roads

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many major road developments have not been the subject of a public inquiry in the last five years. [208[illegible]41]

Mr. Jamieson: In the last five years one major road development has not been the subject of a public inquiry—M11 Stansted Slips. As there were no unresolved objections to the scheme, a public inquiry was not required.

Virginia Bottomley: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what criteria were applied when his Department first separated trunk roads into national and regional schemes; [209521]

(2) which trunk roads have been downgraded from national to regional significance in the last 10 years; and what consultation took place on this issue. [209522]

Mr. Jamieson: The Government's consultation paper—"Devolving Decision Making: A Consultation on Regional Funding Allocations"—set out our proposals to establish regional transport funding allocations.

The consultation paper explained that the proposed regional transport funding allocations would initially bring together capital funding projected for major schemes (generally costing over £5 million each) under the Local Transport Plan (LTP) system and for major Highways Agency schemes, other than those on routes of national and international significance. To be regarded as being of national and international significance, a route has to satisfy all the following criteria:

> to have average daily traffic flows, along the length of the route, of more than 60,000 vehicles;
>
> to link at least two of the top 20 English cities by population; or link one of the top 20 cities with an airport/seaport or Wales/Scotland;
>
> to carry heavy goods vehicle traffic equal to or in excess of 15 per cent. as a percentage of all traffic, as an average along the length of the route; and
>
> to be represented on the European Union's trans-European transport network

In some cases these criteria were applied with a degree of flexibility.

A map illustrating the application of these criteria to the trunk road network was provided as part of the current consultation exercise.

These proposals will not lead to a downgrading in the importance of certain routes. The proposed regional funding allocations will give regions a far stronger base on which to plan, and will enable them to contribute to decisions that better reflect regional priorities.

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the working of the regional decision-making process in relation to the roads programme, with particular reference to the south-west. [209274]

Mr. Jamieson *[holding answer 18 January 2005]:* The detailed arrangements for the submission of advice to the Department from the region on the prioritisation of road schemes in their area will be announced in due course and will be subject to the outcome of the current consultation about long term funding guidelines. Copies of the consultation document "Devolving decision making: a consultation on regional funding allocations" are available in the House Libraries. We look forward to receiving the views of regional and local bodies in the south-west and other regions on the consultation document.

Under the proposals in the document, the Regional Assembly and the Regional Development Agency in each region would advise on the relative priority of road schemes alongside other transport proposals in the region and on the basis of long term regional funding guidelines. These bodies would be expected to consult widely within the region, including with local transport authorities, in framing their advice on priorities.

State Opening

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what his estimate is of the cost to the economy of the disruption to traffic caused by the State Opening of Parliament. [208235]

Mr. McNulty: The Department for Transport has not undertaken any analysis of the cost to the economy of the disruption to traffic caused by the State Opening of Parliament. It is thought to be minimal.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Departmental Staff

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of his Department's staff is based in London. [208033]

Fiona Mactaggart: The following table gives a breakdown by administrative division within the Home Office as at April 2004.

Department	*London*	*All areas*	*Percentage London*
Home Office main (excluding agencies)	11,500	18,780	61
Criminal Records Bureau	0	340	0
Forensic Science Service	730	2,450	29.8
United Kingdom Passport Agency	570	2,450	23.3
Assets Recovery Agency	60	90	66.7
Charity Commission	150	540	27.8
HM Prison Service	6,200	45,290	13.7
Grand total Home Office	19,210	69,940	27.5

Note:

Figures are permanent and full-time equivalent, rounded.

Fingerprinting

Mr. Lilley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many fingerprint reading machines linked to the National Fingerprint Register are operated by police forces in the UK; and how many checks were carried out in each year since these machines became available. [207466]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 10 January 2005]:* At present there are 198 Livescan Units in use in police forces in England and Wales, linked to the National Automated Fingerprint Identification System (NAFIS) to take fingerprints from arrestees.

The number of identity checks[1] and submissions[2] carried out since the introduction of Livescan in England and Wales is as follows.

[1] An "identity check" is where a police officer takes the fingerprints of a person in custody only to check whether a record exists on the NAFIS Database.

[2] A "submission" is where the prints take from the-person in custody, is recorded on the NAFIS database and creates a Police National Computer (PNC) record. This process still includes an identity check.

	Number
2000	1,690
2001	102,099
2002	343,692
2003	524,729
2004	703,626

The steady increase in the number of fingerprints taken reflects the increasing use by forces of the technology.

I understand from the Scottish Executive that police forces in Scotland started using Livescan Units in August 1997. There are now 33 Livescan Units in use by Scottish forces.

The number of identity checks and submissions carried out is:

	Number
1997–98	50,938
1998–99	65,368
1999–2000	68,000
2000–01	60,792
2001–02	61,349
2002–03	60,467
2003–04	64,735
2004–05 (to 31 December 2004)	54,638

The Police Service of Northern Ireland is currently piloting the use of Livescan technology. One machine has been installed at a police station in Belfast, and has been operational since 4 October 2004. Between 4 October 2004 and 10 January 2005 this machine handled 200 identity checks and submissions. The results of the pilot scheme will be analysed and decisions on expanding the use of the technology will be taken in light of that analysis.

Prisons

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prison officers quarters' are owned by the prison department at prisons in England and Wales. [209405]

Paul Goggins: Her Majesty's Prison Service, for England and Wales, currently owns about 550 prison officer quarters.

Race Relations (Sikhs)

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which Sikh organisations he met in each of the last three years. [205947]

Fiona Mactaggart *[holding answer 20 December 2004]:* The information requested is as follows:

> On Friday 14 January 2005 I met the Councils of Sikh Gurdwaras.
>
> On 19 October 2004 I spoke at the 400th anniversary celebration of the installation of the Guru Granth Sahib in the House of Lords on behalf of my right hon. Friend the former Home Secretary member for Sheffield Brightside (David Blunkett).
>
> As part of my constituency duties I met the Sikh Remembrance Lobby in November 2004.
>
> In July I attended the launch of Anglo Sikh Heritage Trail where I also met representatives of the Network of Sikh Organisations and Sikhs in England.
>
> In October 2003 I met a delegation co-ordinated by the British Sikh Consultative Forum to discuss a range of issues facing the Sikh community.

I have twice met a senior representative of the British Sikh Consultative Forum. On a number of occasions I have met Dr. Indarjit Singh, a prominent figure within the Sikh community and a member of the Steering Group for the Review of the Government's engagement with faith communities, which I chaired.

My predecessor, Lord Filkin, visited a Sikh temple in Birmingham in February 2003. He had a meeting with representatives of various Sikh groupings in July 2002 and dinner with the Sikh Human Rights Group in March 2002

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Civil Service Salaries

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the average annual increase in gross salary was for the year 2003–04 for *(a)* staff below the Senior Civil Service and *(b)* the Senior Civil Service in her Department. [208109]

Derek Twigg: In my Department, the average annual increase in gross salary for the year 2003–04 for staff below the Senior Civil Service was £988 (3.42 per cent.)[1]. For the Senior Civil Service, the average annual increase was £2,624 (3,59 per cent.).

[1] The calculation includes permanent and temporary staff on a full time equivalent basis.

Correspondence

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when she will reply to the letter dated 3 December 2004 from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton, with regard to Paul Jackson. [209860]

Derek Twigg: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State replied to the right hon. Member's letter dated 7 December on 14 January.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the running costs of the Department were in each year since 1997, broken down by *(a)* electricity, *(b)* water, *(c)* gas, *(d)* telephones, *(e)* mobile telephones and *(f)* televisions. [206674]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The information for my Department is as follows:

£

Financial year	*Electricity*	*Water*	*Gas*	*Telephones*	*Mobile phones*	*Televisions*
2003–04	891,856	101,974	129,767	2,402,107	270,547	[1]—
2002–03	916,600	131,969	132,642	1,981,214	353,955	[1]—
2001–02	936,193	146,839	143,222	2,924,221	374,248	[1]—
2000–01	836,678	108,331	116,990	3,076,291	329,196	[1]—
1999–2000	1,000,879	121,895	84,643	2,975,587	218,889	[1]—
1998–99	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	168,298	[1]—
1997–98	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	170,045	[1]—

[1]— = This information is not held centrally and it would require a departmental trawl, at disproportionate cost.

Electronic Devices

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many electronic devices are owned by the Department, broken down by type. [207674]

Derek Twigg: The number of electronic devices owned by the Department for Education and Skills by type is:

	Number
Mobile phones	1,140
Personal computers	6,013
Laptop computers	2,351
File servers	651
Printers/scanners	1,755

IT Projects

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list her Department's IT projects in each year since 1997, broken down by *(a)* amount spent, *(b)* purpose, *(c)* cost of over-run and *(d)* time of over-run. [205784]

Derek Twigg: Due to disproportionate costs, it is not possible to provide a full list for all years from 1997 and nor can I include every project with a significant IT element. I have included a list of the Department's internal IT projects from 1999–2000 onwards at Annex 1 and a list of internet customer portal projects at Annex 2.

Annex 1

Project	*Purpose*	*Launch date*	*Amount spent (£000)*	*Overrun*	*Overrun cost*
Inter-site network improvements	To modernise communication links between DfES HQ buildings for use by computer systems.	Due by March 2005	1,255	None	Nil
CHS	IT system to support a Government requirement for dealing with all correspondence within agreed targets.	May 2000	664	None	Nil
DIAS	Protection of DfES computer systems by the establishment of a discrete development and testing environment for 3rd party suppliers.	March 2004	317	None	Nil
Dual Data Centre	Introduction of disaster recovery facilities for key departmental computer systems.	March 2004	3,940	3 months	Nil
EDRMS	IT system to support a Government requirement for efficient document and record management and compliance with Freedom of Information Act	Ongoing	4,500	On schedule	Nil
Electronic Boardrooms	Presentation equipment installed in all Df ES conference suites.	June 2001	337	None	Nil
Email system improvements	Modernisation of the DfES internal email system	November 2004	525	1 month	Nil
Internet	Giving DfES staff and computer systems access to important Internet based research and information services	March 2000	140	None	Nil
Intranet	Delivering an internal Intranet service for DfES staff to improve communications and information sharing and ongoing improvements	Ongoing	176	None	Nil
Internal data networks	To improve computer networks and cabling infrastructure within DfES HQ sites	June 2004	1,019	None	Nil
Legacy Systems	Modernisation of key departmental information systems to ensure their continued viability.	March 2004	435	None	Nil
Machinery of Government	Transfer of key information systems to DfES as a result of changes in ministerial responsibilities	March 2004	840	None	Nil
[illegible]CTV	Introduction of an internal TV communications medium for DfES.	March 2000	150	None	Nil
Remote Working	Introduction of flexible home working facilities for DfES staff and the provision of laptops for key workers	August 2000	880	2 months	Nil
Remote Working enhancements	Introduction of broadband facilities for home working.	March 2005	415	On-time	Nil
Services Zone	Improving internal efficiency by providing online access to the booking and use of DfES corporate services	October 2004	520	None	Nil
Video conferencing	Modernisation of DfES videoconferencing network enabling reduced costs due to less need to travel	April 2004	1998	2 months	Nil
Y2K	Ensuring the Year 2000 compliance of all DfES information systems	December 1999	139	None	Nil

Annex 2—Customer portal projects(£000)

Portal project	*Purpose*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*Spend at launch*
HE students	To bring together in one place all relevant information and services to enable students to make effective choices and decisions.	140	70	210
School governors	To bring together information that a new, experienced or prospective School Governor would need to carry out their role.	280	—	280
Young people	To provide young people with a wide range of impartial, user-friendly information from across the public and voluntary sectors.	105	288	393
Parents	To provide information and services to encourage the engagement of parents and carers in supporting their child's education.	185	—	185
Employers	To improve employer engagement by providing information that helps employers make better informed decisions about developing their workforce.	156	—	156
Teachers	To provide information and services that help teaching staff make best use of their time	280	—	280
Adult learners	To provide information and services that encourage greater participation in lifelong learning.	200	—	200

School Computers

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much public funding has been spent on computers in *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools in Stoke on Trent in each year since 1997. [209909]

Derek Twigg: I refer my hon. Friend to "Funding for ICT in Schools in England" which is available in the House Library.

Stolen Property

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list the property belonging to her Department that has been *(a)* stolen and *(b)* reported lost in each year since 1997, broken down by type of article. [206372]

Derek Twigg: The following table details the equipment belonging to the Department for Education and Skills reported as stolen and lost in each year since 1 May 1997 along with the approximate value of the stolen equipment.

Description	*Number of items*	*Approximate value per item (£)*	*Total approximate value (£)*
Financial year 1997–98			
Laptop PC	5	1,000	5,000
Printer	2	300	600
PC chips	4	125	500
PC hard drive	1	900	900
IT kit	13	1,035	13,455
Power drill	2	145	290
CCTV camera	1	1,000	1,000
Mobile phone	1	200	200
Total			21,945
Financial year 1998–99			
Laptop PC	7	1,000	7,000
Palmtop PC	1	250	250
PC chips	From 205 PCs	423.57	86,831
Total			94,081
Financial year 1999–2000			
Laptop PC	5	1,000	5,000
Palmtop PC	1	250	250
PC processing unit	2	1,000	2,000
Mobile phone	1	60	60
Total			7,310
Financial year 2000–01			
Laptop PC	2	1,000	2,000
Palm Pilot PC	1	300	300
Nokia WAP phone	1	200	200
Mobile phone and charger	1	100	100
Total			2,600
Financial year 2001–02			
Laptop PC	3	1,000	3,000
Mobile phone	2	100	200
Video phone	1	200	200
Phone charger	1	25	25
Dictaphone	1	40	40
Chair	1	80	80
Total			3,545
Financial year 2002–03			
Mobile phone	4	102.50	410
Headphone	1	10	10
Digital camera	1	200	200
Total			620
Financial year 2003–04			
PC chips	94	30	2,820
Data projector	2	2,760	5,520
Laptop PC	8	1,326.58	10,612.64
Mobile phone	7	91.43	640
Digital voice recorder	1	100	100
PC carrying case	1	30	30
Wall clock	1	5	5
Desk phone	1	113.40	113.40
Total			19,841
Financial year 2004–05			
Laptop PC	4	1,326.58	5,306
Palmtop PDA PC	1	350	350
Scanner cable	1	20	20
Wireless router	1	100	100
Digital camera	1	300	300
Mobile phone	6	33.34	200
Total			6,276

Telephone Numbers

Mr. Tyler: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much revenue her Department has received from the use of non-geographic 0870 telephone numbers for the period 1 October 2003 to 30 September. [205822]

Derek Twigg *[holding answer 20 December]:* The Department for Education and Skills does not participate in revenue share schemes associated with 0870 telephone numbers and therefore derives no revenue from the use of these numbers.

Mr. Tyler: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many non-geographic 0870 telephone numbers are in use by her Department; and what services can be accessed by calling each of them. [205836]

Derek Twigg: The Department for Education and Skills has eight non-geographic 0870 numbers in use as follows (number of lines in brackets):

Main DfES switchboard number (1)
Public Communications Unit (PCU) (1)
Office of the Schools Adjudicator (OSA) (1)
Special Educational Needs Tribunal (SEN Tribunal) (5).

NORTHERN IRELAND

Decommissioning

7. **Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what recent developments there have been on decommissioning in Northern Ireland. [208440]

Mr. Pearson: There have been four acts of decommissioning to date. The latest act occurred on 21 October 2003, when the Independent International Commission on Decommissioning reported that it had witnessed a third event in which IRA weapons were put beyond use. The Prime Minister made it clear at Leeds Castle that the Government regards the completion of decommissioning by paramilitary groups as essential to progress in Northern Ireland.

Peace Process

9. **Dr. Palmer:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the peace process. [208442]

Mr. Murphy: I refer my hon. Friend to the oral answer I gave earlier today.

Bank Security

10. **Mr. Gordon Prentice:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps are being taken to encourage banks and other premises where large amounts of cash are held to increase security. [208443]

Mr. Pearson: I met with the chief executives of the four main banks in Northern Ireland last week to discuss how security systems can be further enhanced. I have asked the Armed Robbery Expert Group of the Organised Crime Task Force to look urgently at the lessons to be learned from this robbery and to report at the next meeting of the OCTF. The banks and other major financial institutions already meet regularly with the police to discuss crime prevention.

Education

11. **Mr. Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to broaden the types of religious and other value systems education available in schools in Northern Ireland. [208444]

Mr. Gardiner: The religious education core syllabus is intended to comprise about half of the teaching time for RE, allowing schools scope to include other religions and value systems if they wish. I am awaiting proposals from the Churches for a revised core syllabus, which will also address the study of other world religions. In addition, citizenship education, which will cover issues such as religious diversity, is currently being piloted and will become compulsory from September 2006.

Paramilitary Organisations

12. **Kevin Brennan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of recent illegal activity by paramilitary organisations; and if he will make a statement. [208445]

Mr. Pearson: There is no doubt that paramilitary organisations continue to engage in illegal activity. The IMC report which was published on 4 November 2004 provided a clear assessment of the extent of the involvement of both loyalist and republican paramilitary organisations in organised crime and other forms of criminality. The Government have consistently made it clear that there can be absolutely no place for terrorist activity or criminal activity and I call on all paramilitary groups to cease all their activities.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people linked to *(a)* loyalist paramilitary organisations, *(b)* republican paramilitary organisations and *(c)* criminal gangs have been investigated by the Assets Recovery Agency; and what the most recent figures are for the proportion of investigations in each case which led to recovery of assets. [208448]

Mr. Pearson: As at 10 January 2005, 15 cases relating to individuals believed to have links to loyalist groups and 12 cases relating to individuals believed to have links to republican groups have been referred to the Assets Recovery Agency. A further 25 cases relating to individuals from a general criminal or organised criminal background have also been referred.

Of those referrals, 39 cases are in assessment, under active investigation or under settlement and it is not appropriate for Government to comment on on-going investigations. Funds will be recovered when proceedings have successfully concluded and assets liquidated. The agency has frozen around £3.5 million of assets in a total of nine cases, including the Johnson case, which involves £1.25 million worth of assets, and is being liquidated.

Sinn Fein

13. **Mr. Robathan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the willingness of Sinn Fein to pursue its political agenda by solely peaceful and legal means. [208446]

Mr. Paul Murphy: All political parties in Northern Ireland must pursue their political aims by exclusively peaceful and democratic means. Without that being demonstrably the case, restoration of the Northern Ireland Assembly is not possible. I have made it clear that decisions and responses are now needed from Sinn

Fein and the IRA. I shall also consider carefully the next report to the British and Irish Governments by the Independent Monitoring Commission.

Intelligence

14. **Mr. Donaldson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what discussions he has had with the Chief Constable about improving the intelligence gathering capacity of the Police Service of Northern Ireland in respect of criminal activity by paramilitary organisations. [208447]

Mr. Pearson: The Chief Constable and I meet on a regular basis to discuss security related issues, including intelligence matters.

The Police Service of Northern Ireland uses the national intelligence model to manage the gathering, analysis and dissemination of intelligence. This relates to all levels of criminality from serious and organised crime to volume crime. As with all such systems, it is constantly reviewed for effectiveness.

The Chief Constable has fully implemented the Patten recommendations in relation to Special Branch and a new Crime Operations Department has been created. This ensures that there is effective sharing of intelligence information with those investigating organised crime.

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how often he receives intelligence briefings from the Chief Constable of the Police Service of Northern Ireland. [208441]

Mr. Paul Murphy: I have formal meetings on a variety of security related issues with the Chief Constable and the GOC together with regular informal discussions which are informed by the full range of information at PSNI's disposal.

Andersonstown News Group

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what representations he has received from other newspaper and media groups in Northern Ireland concerning financial assistance to the Andersonstown News Group; and if he will make a statement. [208892]

Mr. Gardiner: James Fitzpatrick, Chairman of the Irish News Ltd. wrote to me on 4 October 2004 in relation to the Andersonstown News Group's proposed launch of "Daily Ireland", a new daily newspaper. I wrote to Mr. Fitzpatrick on 11 November 2004 offering a meeting but to date that offer has not been taken up.

Assets Recovery Agency

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much the Assets Recovery Agency has recovered from *(a)* Loyalist and *(b)* Republican sources in each year since its formation; and if he will make a statement. [209392]

Mr. Pearson: As at 10 January 2005, 15 cases relating to individuals believed to have links to loyalist groups and 12 cases relating to individuals believed to have links to republican groups have been referred to the Assets Recovery Agency. A further 25 cases relating to individuals from a general criminal or organised criminal background have also been referred.

Of those referrals, 39 cases are in assessment, under active investigation or under settlement and it is not appropriate for the Government to comment on ongoing investigations. Funds will be recovered when proceedings have successfully concluded and assets liquidated. The agency has frozen around £3.5 million of assets in a total of nine cases, including the Johnson case, which involves £1.25 million worth of assets, and is being liquidated.

Child Support Agency

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many complaints have been referred to the independent case examiner so far in 2004–05 in respect of *(a)* the Eastern Business Unit and *(b)* the Northern Ireland Operations of the Northern Ireland Child Support Agency. [208574]

Mr. Spellar: The Independent Case Examiner does not accept complaints where the agency has not previously had the opportunity to respond. During 2004–05, 579 complaints relating to Eastern Business Unit's cases were referred but 311 were not accepted. During 2004–05, 38 complaints were referred to the Independent Case Examiner regarding Northern Ireland cases. Of these, 17 were not accepted.

Community Relations

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much was spent on community relations by each Northern Ireland district council in each of the last five years; and what proportion of each district council area's total spending in each year these figures represent. [209204]

Angela Smith: The figures requested are available only for 2002–03 and 2003–04. Details of community relations expenditure, total gross expenditure and community relations expenditure expressed as a proportion of total gross expenditure for each of the 26 district councils are set out in the following table.

2002–03

District council	*Community relations expenditure (£)*	*Total gross expenditure (£)*	*Community relations expenditure as percentage of total gross expenditure (percentage)*
Antrim	61,853	11,489,836	0.5383
Ards	115,322	19,877,085	0.5802
Armagh	122,797	13,942,950	0.8807
Ballymena	119,271	17,402,880	0.6854
Ballymoney	99,324	6,100,350	1.6282

2002-03

District council	*Community relations expenditure (£)*	*Total gross expenditure (£)*	*Community relations expenditure as percentage of total gross expenditure (percentage)*
Banbridge	118,186	10,152,747	1.1641
Belfast	4,028	94,869,362	0.0042
Carrickfergus	85,692	10,342,624	0.8285
Castlereagh	90,151	15,660,030	0.5757
Coleraine	98,289	17,036,576	0.5769
Cookstown	139,759	7,230,614	1.9329
Craigavon	7,697	21,251,805	0.0362
Perry	228,772	33,793,461	0.6770
Down	125,820	19,202,752	0.6552
Dungannon	109,999	8,926,320	1.2323
Fermanagh	129,337	10,774,469	1.2004
Larne	87,717	8,677,360	1.0109
Limavady	95,674	6,538,831	1.4632
Lisburn	87,231	25,207,008	0.3461
Magherafelt	74,180	9,089,559	0.8161
Moyle	71,270	6,591,136	1.0813
Newry and Mourne	82,515	19,654,272	0.4198
Newtownabbey	93,925	27,186,215	0.3455
North Down	71,844	17,280,732	0.4157
Omagh	196,470	12,153,629	1.6166
Strabane	126,873	7,850,047	1.6162
Total	2,643,996	458,282,650	0.5769

2003-04

District council	*Community relations expenditure (£)*	*Total gross expenditure (£)*	*Community relations expenditure as percentage of total gross expenditure (percentage)*
Antrim	62,046	11,708,695	0.5299
Ards	69,281	17,437,239	0.3973
Armagh	152,588	13,878,196	1.0995
Ballymena	137,838	16,684,594	0.8261
Ballymoney	100,974	7,008,080	1.4836
Banbridge	120,613	10,430,855	1.1563
Belfast	0	103,495,968	0.0000
Carrickfergus	79,836	10,331,253	0.7728
Castlereagh	115,569	15,463,248	0.7474
Coleraine	92,340	17,045,260	0.5417
Cookstown	157,542	7,895,927	1.9952
Craigavon	19,083	22,662,649	0.0842
Perry	192,123	33,575,840	0.5722
Down	127,666	20,590,764	0.6200
Dungannon	113,457	9,745,289	1.1642
Fermanagh	127,998	11,449,703	1.1179
Larne	66,199	9,084,108	0.7287
Limavady	104,673	7,855,498	1.3325
Lisburn	88,988	27,580,155	0.3227
Magherafelt	90,657	9,396,555	0.9648
Moyle	65,355	6,526,117	1.0014
Newry and Mourne	94,840	21,360,516	0.4440
Newtownabbey	52,937	22,513,277	0.2351
North Down	93,699	19,285,745	0.4858
Omagh	115,465	13,175,731	0.8763
Strabane	124,445	8,421,058	1.4778
Total	2,569,212	474,602,320	0.5413

Down District Council

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* Roman Catholics and *(b)* Protestants constituted the workforce of Down district council in each of the past 10 years; how many (i) jobs were advertised and (ii) vacancies were filled by Protestants in each year. [200500]

Angela Smith: The information requested has been provided by Down district council but is available for the past seven years only. The detail is set out in the following table. A substantial number of the jobs advertised during 1997, 1998 and 1999 relate to temporary employment during the summer period (but are not included in the figures). From 2000 to date these temporary positions are filled through an agency arrangement and are not, therefore, advertised by the council.

	Protestants	*Catholics*	*Jobs advertised*	*Vacancies filled by Protestants*
1997	64	171	128	22
1998	73	174	128	27
1999	77	194	72	13
2000	74	189	20	3
2001	78	230	63	17
2002	76	219	36	11
2003	69	222	38	8

Economic Vision Document

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the timetable is for the publication of the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment's Economic Vision for Northern Ireland document; and what *(a)* internal and *(b)* external consultation will take place on this document. [209119]

Mr. Gardiner: The draft Economic Vision for Northern Ireland was published for consultation on 12 October 2004 alongside the draft Priorities and Budget 2005–08 and the Northern Ireland Civil Service reform document "Fit for Purpose". The consultation period ended on 7 December 2004 and it is anticipated that the final Vision document will be published in February 2005.

Ongoing internal consultation took place across all NI Departments both prior to and during the formal consultation period.

In terms of external consultation, the draft Economic Vision was sent to some 2,000 recipients as part of the wider Priorities and Budget 2005–08 formal consultation process and meetings were also held with a number of external stakeholders. In addition, I am arranging meetings to be held in the next few weeks with the economic spokespersons of the five main political parties and the Economic Development Forum to discuss the emerging Vision document and the way forward.

GCSEs

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average GCSE points scores for each school type in Northern Ireland, excluding GNVQ Part One qualifications and GCSE short courses, have been in each year since 2000. [208429]

Mr. Gardiner: The information requested is as follows:

	Average point score			
School type	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*
Controlled	32.6	33.3	32.9	33.0
Voluntary	56.5	56.1	57.1	57.5
Catholic maintained	26.6	26.8	27.4	27.2
Other maintained	31.9	38.5	33.2	38.0
Controlled integrated	28.1	28.7	31.1	29.7
Grant maintained integrated	32.2	31.9	33.1	34.1

Note:
Figures for 2003/04 are not yet available.

Harland and Wolff Catalogue

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps have been taken by *(a)* Museums and Galleries Northern Ireland and *(b)* the Public Records Office Northern Ireland to catalogue the Harland and Wolff working drawings for ships acquired in 2002; and what steps have been taken to provide public access to these documents. [209124]

Angela Smith: Museums and Galleries of Northern Ireland (MAGNI) have been engaged over an extended period in identifying drawings at risk. The priority has been to secure, preserve and catalogue the vast number of drawings in existence. The material collected in 2002 is included in this exercise. In parallel with this, MAGNI has initiated a programme of copying and digitisation of key drawings, the longer term aim of which is to provide enhanced public access to the drawings. Some of the drawings are currently on display in the Titanic Exhibition at the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum.

The Public Record Office of Northern Ireland has a small group of ships' drawings—86 in all from 1956–76—which are all catalogued and available for public access.

Hospital Cleaners

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many cleaners are employed at each hospital in Northern Ireland. [209164]

Angela Smith: The information requested is provided in the following table.

Number of domestic cleaning staff employed at each hospital in Northern Ireland

Hospital	*Headcount*	*Whole-time equivalent*
Altnagelvin Area Hospital	101	69.65
Antrim Area Hospital	287	171.54
Ards Hospital	27	11.96
Banbridge Polyclinic	1	0.87
Bangor Hospital	8	4.78
Belfast City Hospital	204	40.41
Causeway Hospital	75	38.88
Craigavon Area Hospital	157	76.00
Daisy Hill Hospital	66	36.45
Dalriada Hospital	10	5.91
Downe Hospital	18	14.93
Downshire Hospital	38	25.48
Erne Hospital	74	40.57
Forster Green Hospital	24	20.66
Gransha Hospital	39	25.50
Holywell Hospital	69	49.57
Lagan Valley Hospital	59	39.15
Longstone	46	21.19
Lurgan Hospital	18	8.17
Mater Hospital	100	71.00
Muckamore Hospital	80	56.00
Mullinure	13	9.89

Number of domestic cleaning staff employed at each hospital in Northern Ireland

Hospital	*Headcount*	*Whole-time equivalent*
Musgrave Park Hospital	124	81.15
Purdysburn Hospital	83	54.34
Robinson Hospital	5	3.10
Royal Hospital	511	323.73
South Tyrone	20	11.83
St. Lukes	48	27.22
Stradreagh Hospital	7	4.80
Thompson House Hospital	7	3.39
Tyrone County Hospital	48	26.50
Tyrone and Fermanagh Hospital	54	33.20
Ulster Hospital	300	97.34
Waterside Hospital	12	9.30
Whiteabbey Hospital	3	2.07
Total	2,736	1,516.53

Source:

NI HSS Trusts

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many cleaners were employed *(a)* at hospitals in Northern Ireland and *(b)* elsewhere within the local NHS in (i) 1985 and (ii) 1995. [209166]

Angela Smith: Not all trusts were able to provide historic staffing figures for the time periods requested. Of those that were, the information is provided in the tables.

Number of domestic cleaning staff employed in hospitals in Northern Ireland in 1985 and 1995

	1985		*1995*	
Hospital	*Headcount*	*WTE*	*Headcount*	*WTE*
Banbridge Hospital	n/a	n/a	14	5.69
Belfast City Hospital	n/a	n/a	264	155.57
Causeway HSS Trust	42	31.48	65	38.46
Craigavon Area Hospital	n/a	n/a	102	60.00
Greenpark HSS Trust	239	175.50	124	78.34
Homefirst Community Trust	n/a	n/a	99	60.59
Lurgan Hospital	n/a	n/a	15	5.30
Muckamore Hospital	n/a	n/a	115	78.02
Royal Hospital	n/a	n/a	565	365.00

n/a = Information not available.

Source:

NI HSS Trusts

Number of domestic cleaning staff employed elsewhere within the local NHS in 1985 and 1995

	1985		*1995*	
	Headcount	*WTE*	*Headcount*	*WTE*
Trust				
Causeway HSS Trust	21	13.35	25	13.22
Craigavon and Banbridge Comm.	n/a	n/a	23	15.88
HSS Trust				
Homefirst Community Trust	n/a	n/a	101	42.88
North and West Belfast Trust	n/a	n/a	90	47.24

n/a = Information not available.

Source:

NI HSS Trusts

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland at which health trusts in the Province cleaning services are *(a)* outsourced, *(b)* directly managed and *(c)* a combination of outsourced and directly managed. [209167]

Angela Smith: The information requested is provided in the following table.

Health trusts in Northern Ireland where cleaning services are (a) outsourced, (b) directly managed and (c) a combination of outsourced and directly managed

NI HPSS Trust	*Cleaning services outsourced*	*Cleaning services directly managed*	*Combination*
Altnagelvin Group HSS Trust	Yes	—	—
Armagh and Dungannon HSS Trust	—	Yes	—
Belfast City Hospital HSS Trust	—	Yes	—
Causeway HSS Trust	—	Yes	—
Craigavon and Banbridge Community HSS Trust	—	—	Yes
Craigavon Area Hospital Group HSS Trust	Yes	—	—
Down Lisburn HSS Trust	—	Yes	—
Foyle Community HSS Trust	—	—	Yes
Greenpark Healthcare HSS Trust	Yes	—	—
Homefirst Community HSS Trust	—	Yes	—
Mater Infirmorum Hospital HSS Trust	—	Yes	—
Newry and Mourne HSS Trust	—	Yes	—
North and West Belfast HSS Trust	—	Yes	—
Royal Group of Hospitals HSS Trust	—	Yes	—
South and East Belfast HSS Trust	—	Yes	—
Sperrin Lakeland HSS Trust	—	—	Yes
Ulster Community and Hospitals Group HSS Trust	—	Yes	—
United Hospitals Group HSS Trust	—	Yes	—
Total	3	12	3

Source:

NI HSS Trusts

Inward Investment (Strabane)

Mr. Trimble: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what additional industrial space is available to the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment in the Strabane district council area to facilitate inward investment. [209180]

Mr. Gardiner: The Orchard Road Industrial Estate, owned by Invest Northern Ireland, holds the majority of available industrial space in Strabane. On this estate Invest NI currently has two sites available for allocation to its client companies, comprising four acres in total. Also on the Orchard Road Estate, 11,000 sq ft of a 30,000 sq ft privately owned business unit is available. Under construction by Strabane Enterprise Agency at Orchard Road is approximately 20,000 sq ft of industrial space which will be released as 22 units.

In the town centre, 4,200 sq ft of commercial floor space is available in Dock street from a private owner.

Midwife-led Maternity Units

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average number of nurses was in each calendar month in 2004 allocated to each shift in each midwife-led maternity unit; and how many *(a)* children were born in each midwife-led maternity unit and *(b)* mothers were turned away from each unit in each month. [209126]

Angela Smith: There was only one midwife-led maternity unit operational in Northern Ireland during 2004 located at Craigavon Area Hospital Group HSS Trust. The requested information, in relation to this unit, is provided in the following tables

Average number of nurses allocated to each shift in each calendar month in 2004

	Headcount	*WTE*
January to November 2004		
Midwife	3	3
Nursing Auxiliary	1	1
December 2004 (temporary arrangement)		
Midwife	2	2
Nursing Auxiliary	1	1

Source:
Craigavon Area Hospital Group HSS Trust

(a) Births in each calendar month in 2004

Month	*Births*[1]
January	54
February	47
March	50
April	56
May	60
June	60
July	55
August	60
September	80
October	61
November	54
December	53
Total	690

[1] Figures will include any births where the mother was initially admitted to the midwife-led maternity unit but was later transferred to the main Delivery Suite to give birth before being re-admitted to the unit.

Source:
Craigavon Area Hospital Group HSS Trust

(b) Number of mothers turned away from the midwife-led maternity unit in each calendar month in 2004. This information is not available from the Trust.

Paramilitary Prisoners

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many prisoners in Northern Ireland are being given separated status; and how many belong to each relevant paramilitary group. [208577]

Mr. Pearson: Currently 64 prisoners have been given separated status. This is made up of 22 republican and 42 loyalist prisoners.

It is not possible to provide figures for affiliations to each paramilitary group with absolute certainty.

However, the perceived affiliations are as follows.

	Number
Republican	22
Made up of:	
CIRA	4
RIRA	14
PIRA	3
INLA	1
Loyalist	42
Made up of:	
UVF	14
UFF	5
UDA	21
Loyalist	1
No traces	1

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many prisoners at HMP Maghaberry have *(a)* applied for and *(b)* been granted separated status since its introduction. [208578]

Mr. Pearson: Since the introduction of separated status at Maghaberry prison there have been 161 applications of which 111 have been granted, 37 were withdrawn and 13 have been refused.

Pollution (Belfast)

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will estimate the number of deaths brought forward in 2003–04 *(a)* due to the overall pollution in Belfast and *(b)* as a direct result of pollution from Belfast City Airport, using the same methodology as the 1998 Committee on the Medical Effects of Air Pollutants report on The Quantification of the Effects of Air Pollution on Health in the United Kingdom. [204209]

Angela Smith: Calculations carried out by the Government consultants for 2003–04 have not yet been completed. Calculations are available for 2002.

These calculations follow the methods recommended in 1998 by the Committee on the Medical Effects of Air Pollutants (COMEAP) in their report on The Quantification of the Effects of Air Pollution on Health in the United Kingdom. Deaths brought forward due to PM10 were 166 in Northern Ireland as a whole with 34 in Belfast city district. The deaths brought forward from emissions from the airport are not quantifiable given the scale and the number of emission sources that contribute to local air quality in the vicinity of the airport.

The pollutant PM10 has been chosen to calculate the number of deaths brought forward as it encompasses the majority of health effects related to ambient air pollution. In addition, the PM10 COMEAP coefficient is considered to be more robust.

COMEAP plans to revisit the 1998 report on the Quantification of the Effects of Air Pollution on Health in the United Kingdom (commonly referred to as the QUARK report) next year. The QUARK 2 group will start work early in 2005 with a report expected by mid-2006.

Street Lighting

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many recorded incidents, excluding those caused by weather, vandalism or damage caused by contractors, resulted in the interruption of electricity supplies to street lighting in Northern Ireland in the last 12 months; and what the average duration was of such faults to the electricity supply. [209121]

Mr. Spellar: The Chief Executive of Roads Service has been asked to write to the hon. Member in response to this question.

Letter from Dr. Malcolm McKibbin to Lady Hermon, dated 19 January 2005:

You recently asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland a Parliamentary Question about the number of recorded incidents and average duration of interruption of electricity supplies to street lighting in the last 12 months (209121). I have been asked to reply as the issue of street lighting falls within my responsibility as Chief Executive of Roads Service.

I should explain that while Roads Service is responsible for the provision and maintenance of street lighting, responsibility for the continuity of electrical supply to the lights rests with Northern Ireland Electricity (NIE).

Roads Service officials are presently liaising with NIE to obtain the details that you have requested, and I will forward the information to you in due course.

I hope this information is helpful.

Titanic Quarter

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what progress has been made to facilitate the creation of a museum dedicated to the Titanic story at Titanic Quarter; and what assessment has been made of the benefits of such a museum on the Northern Ireland economy and tourist sector. [209122]

Angela Smith: The provision of a museum in the Titanic Quarter is being dealt with as part of the development of a strategy of the Titanic area being taken forward by the Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) and Belfast city council (BCC). NITB in their Strategic Framework for Action listed Titanic (Maritime) Belfast as one of their five signature projects for tourism development in Northern Ireland. BCC and NITB have established a Titanic Forum comprising all the main stakeholders, including the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) and the National Museums and Galleries of Northern Ireland (MAGNI), and have commissioned consultants to prepare and agree a vision for the Titanic Project, prepare a business plan for the delivery and implementation and undertake an economic appraisal of the project which will include quantification of the social and economic impact. This is due to be completed in April 2005.

Water and Sewerage Charges

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether it is his policy to allocate additional resources to *(a)* schools, *(b)* hospitals and *(c)* Government departments in order to compensate them for the impact of the introduction of water and sewerage charges from April 2006. [208600]

Mr. Pearson: Schools, hospitals and Government Departments in Northern Ireland already pay water charges. They will also become liable for sewerage charges once the new arrangements for financing the water service in Northern Ireland begin to be introduced. The phased approach to be used in introducing these new charges means that this was not an issue in the recent Priorities and Budget 2005–08 process. The allocation of resources beyond this period will be considered in future Budget processes.

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assumptions have been made in planning his budgets for the Northern Ireland departments over the three years from April 2006 about the amount of money in each year that will be released for other public expenditure in Northern Ireland as a result of the introduction of a self-financing regime for water and sewage services. [208601]

Mr. Pearson: Allocations to NI departments for 2006–07, as set out in the recent Priorities and Budget 2005–08 publication, assume that one third of charging income will be paid in that year, and that £50–80 million of the current operating costs of the Water Service would be available for allocation to other public services.

The position for 2007–08 and beyond will be an issue for future Budget processes.

TREASURY

AIDS Vaccine

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when his Department's first tranche of funding for the advance purchase scheme for AIDS vaccine research will begin. [209071]

Mr. Boateng: The Chancellor has announced that the UK will explore, with other G7 countries, how to construct "advance purchase contracts" for malaria and AIDS vaccines.

Advance purchase contracts are structured so that payment by the commissioning party is made upon delivery of the good or service. In this example therefore, the UK government's first tranche of funding for the advance purchase scheme for AIDS will issue once an effective AIDS vaccine has been developed.

Central Government Grant

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much each *(a)* nation and *(b)* region of the United Kingdom received in central Government grant in the latest year for which figures are available, listed in descending order. [209293]

Mr. Boateng: Data relating to total identifiable expenditure by central and local government can be found within chapter 8 of "Public Expenditure, Statistical Analyses 2004" (Cm6201), a copy of which can be found in the Library of the House. Table 8.1 details identifiable expenditure by nation and region of the United Kingdom for the years 1998–99 to 2002–03, the latest year for which data are available.

Local Government Finance

Mr. Pike: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, which 50 local authorities in England have the highest percentage of properties in Council Tax Band A. [209413]

Dawn Primarolo: The information requested is contained in the table.

Name	*Percentage within Band A*
Easington	81
Hull	71
Derwentside	70
Wansbeck	70
Sedgefield	69
South Tyneside	68
Nottingham	67
Manchester	66
Sunderland	66
Wear Valley	65
Gateshead	65
Bolsover	64
Liverpool	64
Pendle	63
Barnsley	63
Stoke on Trent	63
Blyth Valley	62
Burnley	62
Leicester	61
Lincoln	61
Hartlepool	61
Doncaster	61
Sheffield	61
Newcastle upon Tyne	60
Barrow in Furness	60
Copeland	60
Hyndburn	60
Blackburn	60
Corby	59
Knowsley	59
Rotherham	59
Rochdale	58
Mansfield	57
Middlesbrough	57
Ashfield	56
Chesterfield	55
Oldham	55
Chester le Street	55
Wakefield	54
Tameside	54
North Tyneside	54
Derby	53
Bassetlaw	53
Bolton	53
Rossendale	53
North East Lincolnshire	53
Wolverhampton	53
Berwick upon Tweed	50
North Lincolnshire	50
Allerdale	49

Lorry Road User Charge (Northern Ireland)

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the implications are of cross-border roads in Northern Ireland in relation to implementing the proposed lorry road-user charge. [209260]

John Healey: The Government are committed to introducing a distance-based lorry road-user charge, with offsetting tax cuts for those who buy their fuel in the UK. We have been developing proposals in consultation with the haulage industry and, as announced in the pre-Budget report (Cm 6408), we have today issued a discussion paper, which considers various details of how the charge might operate in practice. The discussion paper is available in the Library of the House.

Land borders always provide challenges for distance-based road charging systems, both in determining UK distances travelled to which any charge should be applied, and in ensuring that vehicles crossing the boundary are complying with the charging requirements.

The UK land boundary in Northern Ireland presents particular challenges, with over 300 open crossing points between the UK and the Republic of Ireland. A number of cross-border routes also include roads which pass into and out of the UK a number of times, in some cases without visibly identifiable crossing points.

HM Customs and Excise, who are developing LRUC on behalf of the Government, are including these requirements in their specification for a modern, automated system for the UK.

National Debt

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the level of national debt in *(a)* 2009–10 and *(b)* what it was in 1997–98. [209424]

Mr. Boateng: Outturn figures for public sector net debt are available on the Office for National Statistics website: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/tsdtables1.asp?vlnk=fsf

Table 1.1A: Public Sector Finances (series RUTO) shows figures for public sector net debt as a percentage of GDP.

The latest available projections for public sector net debt for 2009–10 are published by HM Treasury in Table B9: Current and Capital Budgets on page 204 of the Pre-Budget Report 2004.

National Insurance Contributions

Mr. Webb: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many deficiency notices he *(a)* has issued and *(b)* expects to issue in order to ensure that all individuals are notified of gaps in their national insurance contribution (NIC) record since 1997–98; what data he collects on the (i) age, (ii) marital status and (iii) gender of recipients; how many people have so far responded by making voluntary NIC payments to fill gaps in their record; how many notices have been issued to (A) women aged 63 years or above and (B) men aged 68 years or above; and if he will make a statement. [208423]

Dawn Primarolo *[holding answer 17 January 2005]:* In September 2004, the Inland Revenue completed the exercise to issue Deficiency Notices to people of working age for the six-year period from 1996–97 to 2001–02. A total of 10.02 million notices were issued.

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and the Northern Ireland Social Security Agency (NISSA) are writing to about 483,000 people who reached state pension age on or before 24 October 2004 and who have deficiencies on their national insurance account for 1996–97 to 2001–02. About 93,000 of these Deficiency Notices have been issued.

For the Inland Revenue exercise, data on the number of recipients of Deficiency Notices by age and gender is as follows:

Million

Age band/gender	*Number of recipients of Deficiency Notices*
Women under 40	3.19
Women 40 to 49	1.62
Women over 49	1.00
Men under 40	2.32
Men 40 to 49	0.94
Men over 49	0.94

Data on age and gender of recipients for the DWP and NISSA exercises and on the marital status of recipients in all exercises is not available.

To date, about 220,000 payments have been received. This will be greater than the number of individuals making payment since they can make more than one payment. An estimate of the number of individuals making payments is not available.

We have now resumed annual exercises to write to people with deficiencies on their national insurance record; the issue of Deficiency Notices for the period 2002–03 has largely been completed.

Pre-Budget Report

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the total cost to public funds will be for the increased spending announced in the pre-Budget report. [209415]

Mr. Timms: The costs of all measures announced in the 2004 pre-Budget report which involve an addition to total Government expenditure can be found in table 1.2 of the 2004 pre-Budget report, which is available in the Library of the House.

Prostate Cancer

Tom Cox: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many men have died from prostate cancer in the United Kingdom in each of the last three years. [209406]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Tom Cox, dated 19 January 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent question concerning how many men have died from prostate cancer in the United Kingdom in each of the last three years. (209406)

The most recently available information is for deaths in 2003. Figures for prostate cancer are shown in the table below for each year from 2001 to 2003.

Number of deaths from prostate cancer[1], United Kingdom, 2001–2003[2]

	No. of deaths
2001	9,903
2002	9,941
2003	10,169

[1] Cause of death was defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) code C61.

[2] Data for England and Wales are for deaths occurring in the calendar year. Data for Scotland and Northern Ireland are for deaths registered in the calendar year.

Research and Development

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what discussions he has had with representatives of small and medium sized businesses regarding tax credits for research and development. [209414]

John Healey: Treasury Ministers regularly receive representations from small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and their representatives on a range of tax issues, including the Research and Development (R and D) tax credit for SMEs. Where possible, Ministers and officials meet with representative bodies to discuss these representations.

Since the introduction of the R and D tax credit in 2000, the Government have continued to consult with small and medium sized enterprises and their representatives. Recent improvements to the credit have resulted from consultation with and suggestions from SMEs and their representative groups. The Government will continue to consult with SMEs on future improvements to the tax credit to ensure its effectiveness.

School-age Children (Drug Deaths)

John Mann: To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer how many school-age children died from drug misuse in each of the last 10 years. [209091]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. John Mann, dated 19 January 2005:

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking how many school-age children died from drug misuse in each of the last ten years. (209091)

The latest available data are for 2002. The figures requested are given in the table below:

Drug misuse-related[1] deaths, children aged 5 to 16,[2] England and Wales, 1993–2002[3]

Calendar year	*Number of deaths*
1993	10
1994	12
1995	16
1996	13
1997	11
1998	14
1999	10
2000	10
2001	11
2002	6

[1] Defined as deaths where the underlying cause is poisoning, drug abuse or drug dependence and where any of the substances controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act (1971) are involved.

[2] Compulsory school age.

[3] Data are for occurrences of death per calendar year.

Source:

Office for National Statistics

Specialist Acute Hospital Services

Mr. Wilkinson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) when he expects to complete consideration of the outline business case on modernising specialist acute hospital services in North West London; and if he will make the conclusions public; [209319]

(2) if he will invite the Comptroller and Auditor General to release personnel from the National Audit Office previously engaged in its consideration of the Paddington Basin Health Campus project last year to assist in his Department's evaluation of the outline business case on the modernising of specialist acute hospital services in West London. [209359]

Mr. Boateng: No business case has yet been submitted to HM Treasury.

Tax Credits

Mr. Pike: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his estimate is of the number of people in the Burnley constituency who have benefitted from tax credits, broken down by *(a)* type of tax credit and *(b)* average amounts received in each category; and if he will make a statement. [209509]

Dawn Primarolo: Estimates of the number of in-work families receiving tax credits (broken down by families with and without children) in each constituency appear in "Child and Working Tax Credit Statistics. Geographical analyses. December 2004." This can be found on the Inland Revenue website at www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/stats/personal-tax-credits/menu.htm. The estimates are based on a sample of cases, and are subject to sampling uncertainty.

Information on the average value of tax credit awards is not currently available.

Adam Price: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) if he will make a statement on Government efforts to reduce the backlog in dealing with working families tax credit appeals on overpayments; [208976]

(2) what is the current average waiting time for the completion of overpayment appeals relating to working families tax credit. [208985]

Dawn Primarolo: The Inland Revenue aims to reply to 80 per cent. of correspondence within 15 working days, and 95 per cent. within 40 working days.

Each case has to be reviewed on its own merits and the Department has recently increased the staff deployed on this work and streamlined its procedures.

The information requested is not available.

Mr. Steen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many demands have been issued by the Tax Credit Office regarding alleged overpayments in each of the last two financial years; what the average sum of overpayments was; how many overpayments have been waived by the Inland Revenue; how many staff are in the Overpayment Recovery team; and how many overpayment cases are currently under investigation. [209041]

Dawn Primarolo *[holding answer 17 January 2005]:* For the number of demands issued by the Inland Revenue regarding tax credit overpayments, the number of overpayments waived and how many overpayments cases are currently under investigation, I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Aberdeen South (Miss Begg) on 10 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 129W.

For the average value of overpayments in 2003–04 I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Members for Northavon (Mr. Webb) and Yeovil (Mr. Laws) on 15 November 2004, *Official Report*, columns 946–48W.

For overpayments in 2002–03, I refer the hon. Member to my answer to the hon. Member for Eddisbury (Mr. O'Brien) on 12 November 2003, *Official Report*, column 394W.

At the end of December 2004 the Tax Credit Office had the equivalent of around 300 full-time staff on their team dealing with tax credit overpayments.

Tsunami Disaster Appeal

John Barrett: To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) if he will add all income received from the taxation of charitable donations to the Disaster Emergency Committee to the Government's aid contribution to the tsunami disaster appeal in Asia; [209027]

(2) if he will estimate the amount raised by the Treasury through the taxation of donations made to the Disaster Emergency Committee as a result of the tsunami in Asia; [209028]

(3) what steps he is taking to encourage those who are donating to the Disaster Emergency Committee as a result of the tsunami in Asia to claim gift aid on their contributions. [209029]

John Healey: Donations to charity are not themselves taxed. The Gift Aid scheme allows individual donors to make a declaration allowing the charity to reclaim the basic rate tax they have paid on the money they donate, adding 28 pence to every £1 donated. In some cases tax will not have been paid on the money donated so there is nothing for the charity to claim back. It is important that charities claim tax only where they have a declaration from the donor allowing them to do so.

The Disasters Emergency Committee has announced that, as of 6 January 2005, £100 million has been donated to the Tsunami appeal. This figure is increasing on a daily basis. It is estimated that Gift Aid tax repaid on donations will be over £15 million. The precise amount will depend upon the final total donations and the number of donors using Gift Aid. Gift Aid declarations may be made retrospectively, so donors who have made donations without making a declaration can go back to the charity and do so. The more donors use Gift Aid the more government will be able to add to their donations.

The Inland Revenue website contains information for donors and charities and there is also a link from the Treasury website to this information. Inland Revenue is actively promoting tax effective methods of giving such as Gift Aid and Payroll Giving. In addition Inland Revenue is offering advice and guidance to charities and the organisers of fundraising events to help them in encouraging their donors to make use of Gift Aid and Payroll Giving.

In addition the Treasury will make a special donation to the Disasters Emergency Committee to offset the VAT costs associated with the proposed charity concert, charity records and other events designed to raise money specifically for the tsunami appeal. The exact sum will be based on the VAT expected to be collected by Customs in relation to fund-raising sales of goods and services.

UK Economy (London's Contribution)

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what percentage contribution London has made to the UK economy in each of the last seven years. [209494]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Andrew Rosindell, dated 19 January 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the percentage contribution London has made to the UK economy in each of the last seven years. (209494)

In order to give a measure of the economy gross value added[1] (GVA) is used. The latest published information is for 2003.

The estimates shown in the table below, are based on the regional gross value added[1] (GVA) estimates published in December 2004. These are available on the National Statistics website at: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_economy/RegionalGVA.pdf

	London GVA at current basic prices (NUTS1 Area)	*Total UK GVA at current basic prices less Extra-Regio2*	*Percentage contribution of London to the UK economy*
1997	110,854	704,744	15.7
1998	121,604	748,872	16.2
1999	129,002	782,682	16.5
2000	134,658	816,549	16.5
2001	141,464	859,795	16.5
2002	151,107	906,000	16.7
2003	155,069	951,692	16.3

[1] Information represented here is gross value added (GVA) which is gross domestic product (GDP) less taxes (plus subsidies) on products.

[2] Extra-Regio is that part of the UK's economic territory which cannot be allocated to any specific region.

Universities

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what meetings he has had with university chancellors and vice-chancellors over the last 12 months. [209421]

Mr. Timms: Treasury Ministers regularly meet representatives from the higher education sector and discuss a wide range of issues.

Vale of Clwyd Constituency

Chris Ruane: To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will set out, including statistical information relating as closely as possible to the constituency, the effect on Vale of Clwyd constituency of his Department's policies since 1997. [209295]

Mr. Timms: The Government have put in place a radical programme of both macro-economic and micro-economic reform since our election in 1997 to improve the economic performance of all parts of the UK. There is significant evidence that these policies have already yielded considerable benefits for the Vale of Clwyd constituency. For example, since May 1997, claimant unemployment has fallen by 52 per cent., and both long-term unemployment and long-term youth unemployment have nearly been eliminated, with falls of 91 per cent. and 81 per cent. respectively.

The Neighbourhood Statistics Service provides a wide range of statistical information at parliamentary constituency level, taken from the 2001 Census and other sources. This service is available on the National Statistics website at http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk./.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Building Energy Standards

Mr. Amess: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether the fuel cost data provided for the revision of building energy standards takes account of the leakage of natural gas during *(a)* processing, *(b)* transmission, *(c)* storage and *(d)* distribution; and whether his Department has studied records of leakage in the USA. [209499]

Phil Hope: The fuel cost data used in the review of the energy efficiency standards required by building regulations reflect typical UK market prices and include all costs associated with delivering fuel to the point of use. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has not studied US leakage data but it is investigating how the global warming implications of gas leaks in the supply system can be taken into account.

Building Regulations

Mr. Todd: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what representations he has received on the definition of a minor work as applied to the inspection of electrical work under Building Regulations; and if he will make a statement. [209532]

Phil Hope: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister received representations on the definition of minor works from a majority of the 490 bodies and individuals who responded to the May 2002 consultation on bringing electrical work into the Building Regulations. The final list of minor works published on 22 July 2004 was drawn up by a Working Party of the Building Regulations Advisory Committee, and was further amended in December 2004 to clarify notification requirements for intruder and fire alarm systems following representations from security industry bodies.

Mr. Djanogly: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what regulatory impact assessment he has made of the cost of *(a)* employing and *(b)* training surveyors to issue annual certificates under the proposed new Building Regulations. [209638]

Phil Hope: There are no requirements for surveyors to issue annual certificates under the proposed new Building Regulations.

Civil Servants

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many of his Department's staff are based outside the London area. [208888]

Yvette Cooper: As of December 2004, 2,188 of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's staff (on a headcount basis) were based outside of the London area.

Civil Service

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the average annual increase in gross salary for the year 2003–04 was for *(a)* staff below the Senior Civil Service and *(b)* the Senior Civil Service in his Office. [208107]

Yvette Cooper: The average annual increase in gross salary for the year 2003–04 in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for staff below the Senior Civil Service was 3.6 per cent.

The average annual increase in gross salary for the year 2003–04 in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for Senior Civil Service staff was 4.7 per cent.

Council Housing

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will set a new target to reduce the council house repairs backlog to 700,000 properties by April 2008. [208389]

Keith Hill: Repairs to council housing are now covered by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's target to ensure social sector homes reach the decent homes standard by 2010. By reducing the number of non-decent homes we are also reducing the repairs backlog.

Departmental Staff/Running Costs

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many staff are employed by his Office; and what its annual running costs are. [209434]

Yvette Cooper: Information on the projected average number of staff employed by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for the 2004–05 financial year can be found in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Annual Report 2004 (pages 123–124) which is available in the Library of the House and electronically at: http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_about/documents/downloadable/odpm _about_028551.pdf

The total running costs, including pay and non-pay costs are forecasted to be around £328 million for the 2004–05 financial year.

Fire and Rescue Control

Mr. Drew: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to his oral answer to the hon. Member for Tewkesbury (Mr. Robertson) of 12 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 290, on Fire and Rescue Control, if he will place in the Library the evidence on which his statement on the difference in cost per incident reported between the Gloucestershire Fire Service Centre and the assumed regional control centre was based. [209607]

Mr. Raynsford: The costs per incident of current control rooms are based on costs information provided to us by individual Fire and Rescue Authorities. The average cost per incident of the regional control centres (RCCs) has been calculated using expected costs pending completion of the procurement processes, for the control centre accommodation and infrastructure. Incident data are collected by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA). A table, showing this information for Gloucestershire, has been made available in the Library of the House.

Graffiti

Mr. Byrne: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what *(a)* obligations are incumbent on and *(b)* powers are at the disposal of local authorities to clean (i) publicly and (ii) privately owned properties of graffiti; and if he will make a statement. [209374]

Phil Hope: In 2002, the cross-government review "Living Places: Powers, Rights and Responsibilities" consulted on obligation and powers for tackling environmental crimes, including graffiti. Since then we have strengthened and streamlined powers to tackle graffiti.

The Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 included powers to issue fixed penalty notices for graffiti on public property, enabling local authorities to issue such notices to people who commit "minor" acts of graffiti and to allow all local authorities to retain income from fixed penalty notices issued for graffiti for use in local environmental improvements.

In the case of graffiti on private buildings owners are expected to remove it. However, Section 48–52 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act introduced new powers to enable local authorities to issue graffiti removal notices against the owners of property in or on the street where this is not done.

The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Bill currently before Parliament proposes further clauses to vary the level of fixed penalty notices, require the name and address of those receiving fixed penalties and extend "authorised officers" able to issue notices. It also proposes a duty on local weights and measures authorities to undertake enforcement of their powers to tackle the sale of spray paints to children under 16 to try reduce the incidence of graffiti.

Home Information Packs

Mr. Djanogly: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether, in the course of preparing policy on home information packs, his officials have visited the USA to inquire into the practice of soil testing for oil pollution as part of real estate transactions; and whether they have corresponded on this subject with officials in the USA. [209639]

Keith Hill: No such visit or correspondence have taken place. Consideration is being given to appropriate means of including in home information packs information about contamination, including oil pollution. This would help ensure that home buyers and sellers are aware of any contamination problems affecting the property.

Home Ownership

Ms Buck: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) if he will break down the low cost home ownership units planned for Westminster and Kensington and Chelsea in the Housing Corporation's 2004–06 approved developed programme by *(a)* one-bed, *(b)* two-bed, *(c)* three-bed and *(d)* four-bed or more; [201964]

(2) if he will break down the low cost home ownership units planned for Westminster and Kensington and Chelsea in the Housing Corporation's 2004–06 Approved Developed Programme by *(a)* conventional shared ownership, *(b)* Do-It-Yourself shared ownership, *(c)* Homebuy and *(d)* other forms of low cost home ownership. [201965]

Keith Hill *[pursuant to his reply, 7 December 2004, Official Report, c. 458–59W:]* On low cost home ownership in Westminster, and Kensington and Chelsea, I stated that 155 ADP Homebuy Market Purchase dwellings were allocated to the Northern zone, which includes Westminster, Islington, Haringey, Enfield, Camden and Barnet. The current figure is 20 allocated to Westminster alone. The figure I gave of 296 Keyworker Homebuy allocations to the Northern zone should be 340.

For Kensington and Chelsea I omitted to give the 16 Homebuy dwellings allocated to the borough itself; and the figure of 296 I gave for the Western zone of seven authorities (Kensington and Chelsea, Hounslow, Hillingdon, Harrow, Hammersmith and Fulham, Ealing and Brent) should have been 334.

A copy of the amended table for all London boroughs has been placed in the Library of the House.

Housing

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many permanent dwellings were constructed in the United Kingdom in each year since 1979 by *(a)* registered social landlords, *(b)* local authorities and *(c)* private enterprise; and how many were in England in each case. [207967]

Keith Hill: Annual house building information for the United Kingdom and England from 1979 onwards is published in "Housing Statistics 2004" (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister) in Tables 2.5a and 2.5c. The tables are also on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website:

http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_control/documents/contentservertemplate/odpm_index.hcst?n=1566&l=3

[Housing—Housing Statistics—Live Tables—Housebuilding—Table 241 (UK) or 244 (England)]

Ms Oona King: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the availability of an environmental health officer to identify an unlicensed house in multiple occupation (HMO) with three or more storeys and five or more occupants as compared to identifying an unlicensed HMO with three or more storeys. [209011]

Keith Hill: The identifying of houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) requiring licensing is a matter for individual local authorities. There are a number of sources available to them, including council tax and housing benefit data. Local housing authorities will also have powers to require owners, managers and occupiers of HMOs to provide information for the purpose of determining the number of occupants. Failure to provide such information without reasonable excuse will be a criminal offence.

Ms Oona King: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister which organisations support establishing the threshold for the mandatory house in multiple occupation licensing scheme of three or more storeys and five or more occupants. [209012]

Keith Hill: In response to the consultation on the draft Housing Bill the following organisations supported the establishment of the threshold for mandatory licensing of houses in multiple occupation at three or more storeys with five or more occupants (comprised in two or more households):

St. David's Community Group

Centrepoint

Unipol

Lincoln City Council.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will have a clearer idea of the range of views on the proposed threshold following responses to the consultation paper "Licensing in the Private Rented Sector—Consultation on the Implementation of HMO Licensing".

The closing date for responses is 9 February.

Ms Oona King: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what threshold for the mandatory house in multiple occupation licensing scheme was proposed by *(a)* the Local Government Association and *(b)* the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health. [209013]

Keith Hill: In response to the consultation on the draft Housing Bill, the Local Government Association proposed that mandatory licensing should apply to houses in Multiple Occupation of two or more storeys and occupied by four or more persons. The Chartered Institute of Environmental Health suggested that guidance should be issued on the scope of licensing, but proposed no specific threshold for mandatory licensing.

Mr. Pike: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what recent discussions his Department has had with the housing renewal pathfinder projects regarding *(a)* progress to date and *(b)* future funding levels; and if he will make a statement. [209412]

Keith Hill: Officials in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister hold regular meetings with all the pathfinders to discuss progress to date and funding. This spring pathfinders will be invited to submit scheme updates to inform allocation of resources in the SR04 spending period (from April 2006 to March 2008).

IT Projects

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list his Department's IT projects in each year since 1997, broken down by *(a)* amount spent, *(b)* purpose, *(c)* cost of over-run and *(d)* time of over-run. [205793]

Yvette Cooper: The following IT projects have been completed since the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was created in May 2002:

Project	*Amount spent (£)*	*Purpose*	*Cost over budget (£)*	*Over-runs*
2002				
Planning Portal	3,107,000	To provide a one-stop-shop for the planning system in England and Wales with the aim of improving the planning system and adding value to the related services	77,000	Three months
Renewal Net	2,500,000	To deliver a website that presents high quality evidence-based information about what works and what doesn't in meeting floor targets so that more practitioners will take an evidence-based approach	None	None
Local e-Government Programme Website	142,000	A website to promote the Local e-Government National Strategy and assist local authorities to e-enable 100 per cent. of priority services by December 2005	None	None
Total	£5.7m			
2003				
Buy-Net (e-Ordering)	2,500,000	To implement an e-ordering solution for ODPM using technology available from the Department's SAP accounting system	None	Three months, but project remained within budget
Corporate Information Infrastructure	1,076,000	The project followed a review that found that significant improvements could be made, and important benefits secured, by creating a new directory to allow staff information to be shared from one virtual pool across all the IT systems that need it	420,000	11 months
GOSAP	837,000	To extend ODPM's central SAP accounting system to the Government Office network	50,000	None
ASSAP	386,000	To separate the DTLR accounting system for ODPM and DfT following the creation of the separate Departments	None	None
Social Exclusion Unit website	69,000	To replace an existing website with one that was functionally richer and more accessible, and allows the Social Exclusion Unit to communicate more effectively with its audiences	None	None
Total	£4.9 million		£0.5 million	
2004				
Housing Grants (LogasNet)	3,308,000	To provide a web-based system to assist with the processing of claims for, and the calculation of, housing subsidies and grants for local authorities in England totalling some £4.3 billion a year as a replacement for an earlier out of date system	None	None
Floor Targets Interactive	170,000	To establish a public access website, which provides information to Neighbourhood Renewal practitioners and other wider audiences on the achievement of floor targets	None	None

Project	Amount spent (£)	Purpose	Cost over budget (£)	Over-runs
New Deal for Communities Performance Managements	130,000	To provide an online centralised reporting mechanism whereby performance information on the New Deal for Communities programme can be collected	None	None
Local Government Intervention Division Database	50,000	The database maintains a central record of the history and nature of Government intervention in local authorities, in order to facilitate inter-departmental cooperation in managing local authority performance	None	None
Total	£3.7 million			

Local Government Finance

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister which billing authorities had the *(a)* highest and *(b)* lowest Band D council tax in England in 2004–05. [207965]

Mr. Raynsford: Assuming all precepts are included, the billing authorities with the highest and lowest Band D council tax in England in 2004–05 were Sedgefield (£1,376) and Wandsworth (£601) respectively. Wandsworth (£553) also had the lowest average council tax, with Richmond-upon-Thames (£1,489) having the highest average.

Mr. Swayne: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether he will provide additional grant to local authorities to refund lost grant arising from amendments to their 2003–04 grant consequent upon errors in population estimates for 2001; and whether he is setting aside amounts to refund authorities for retrospective reductions in their 2004–05 grant arising from errors in population estimates for 2002 by the Department. [208529]

Mr. Raynsford: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has always been clear that we would issue an amending report for the 2003–04 settlement to incorporate the revised 2001 population estimates. It is only fair that authorities should receive the correct amount of grant relative to the updated population estimates. Indeed, we consulted on options for the 2003–04 and 2004–05 amending reports last summer.

However, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister appreciates that it is not possible for authorities that receive less grant under the amending report than they did under the original local government finance report to reopen their budgets for 2003–04. For this reason we will pay, or recover, any changes in 2003–04 grant amounts during 2005–06; and we have proposed amending the floor damping scheme for 2005–06 to ensure that all authorities should receive at least the floor increase in their formula grant after paying back any money owed under the 2003–04 amending report.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister proposes that similar arrangements be put in place for the 2004–05 amending report.

Mr. Swayne: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister for what reasons Hampshire is combined with the Isle of Wight for the purpose of area cost adjustment calculations; and what assessment he has made of the impact that this has on Hampshire's grant allocations. [208530]

Mr. Raynsford: In calculating the area cost adjustment (ACA), authorities are grouped together to make sure that there is enough wage data in each area to produce ACA factors which are robust and stable from year to year. Hampshire and the Isle of Wight are grouped together and so receive the same area cost adjustment. On balance, the new earnings survey sample size for the Isle of Wight is such that their labour costs cannot be estimated with the same degree of precision as other, more populous, areas. The Isle of Wight sample size is no larger than other unitary, metropolitan or London boroughs that we have combined together in order to avoid small samples. This grouping for the ACA treats all authorities more consistently.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not normally exemplify the effect of options that were not adopted in the formula review for subsequent years.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the impact of the local government finance settlement 2005–06 on the level of council tax. [209188]

Mr. Raynsford: The provisional local government finance settlement for 2005–06 provides an increase in formula grant of 5.6 per cent. and we have been able to guarantee that, for the third successive year, all authorities receive a grant increase which is at least above the rate of inflation. Overall grant increases by £3.5 billion or 6.2 per cent., which means that since we took office we have increased Government grant to local government by 33 per cent. in real terms.

Given this substantial investment in local government and scope for efficiency gains, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister expects to see significantly lower council tax increases next year. We expect all authorities to budget prudently and minimise demands on council taxpayers. Average council tax increase in England in 2005–06 should be less than 5 per cent. We are prepared to take even tougher capping action than we did in 2004–05. This applies to all authorities, including police and fire authorities.

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the cost to local authorities was of collecting and enforcing the council tax in England for 2003–04; and if he will make a statement. [209388]

Mr. Raynsford: The cost to local authorities of collecting and enforcing the council tax in England in 2002–03 was £311.1 million.

The data are as reported by local authorities and are taken from outturn figures for 2002–03. Outturn data are not yet available for 2003–04.

Planning Appeals (Coventry)

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many planning appeals there have been in Coventry in the last three years. [208889]

Keith Hill: The information requested is contained in the following table:

Planning appeals in Coventry

Dates	*Planning appeals received by the Planning Inspectorate*	*Planning appeals determined by the Planning Inspectorate*
Between 1 January 2002 and 31 December 2002	31	22
Between 1 January 2003 and 31 December 2003	49	38
Between 1 January 2004 and 31 December 2004	59	37

The difference between the appeals received and the appeals determined columns is accounted for by appeals being received in one period but not being determined until the next. In addition, some appeals are withdrawn and are not determined.

Residential Rates

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the average local authority residential rates bill was for a typical household in England in each year from 1975 to its abolition. [207914]

Mr. Raynsford: Figures for the average domestic rates bill in England for each financial year from 1974–75 to 1989–90 are tabled as follows:

Financial year	*Average domestic rates bill (£)*
1974–75	76
1975–76	94
1976–77	103
1977–78	119
1978–79	131
1979–80	156
1980–81	199
1981–82	244
1982–83	282
1983–84	303
1984–85	323
1985–86	351
1986–87	400
1987–88	419
1988–89	468
1989–90	514

Social Housing (Right to Buy)

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) if he will make a statement on the eligibility of housing association tenants for the right to buy; [208658]

(2) how many housing association tenants are eligible for the right to buy. [208659]

Keith Hill: Around 870,000 housing association tenants have the right to buy or the preserved right to buy their rented homes.

The right to buy is available to approximately 65,000 pre-1988 secure tenants of non-charitable housing associations. Housing association properties were generally let on secure tenancies until 1988 but all new lettings since then have been on assured tenancies which do not include the right to buy.

In addition, some 805,000 former local authority tenants of housing stock which have been transferred to housing associations retain a preserved right to buy.

Supporting People Grants

Mr. Swayne: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether his Department plans to use a revised formula for the supporting people grant allocations for 2005–06; and if he will make a statement. [208528]

Yvette Cooper: The supporting people grant allocations for 2005–06, announced on 2 December 2004, were partly informed by a new needs based distribution formula. The overall size of the supporting people budget has reduced in 2005–06 by 5 per cent. The Government made a commitment to limit any decrease in grant to individual authorities to no more than 7.5 per cent. The majority of authorities received the average reduction of 5 per cent. The formula, which is intended to help allocate funds to areas of greatest relative need, was only used to inform grant levels to those authorities likely to receive longer term increases or decreases in funding.

The Government will shortly launch a formal consultation on the supporting people distribution formula to be used for allocations beyond 2005–06.

Telecommunication Masts

Glenda Jackson: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will revise existing planning procedures to enable local authorities to ban the siting of mobile phone masts near *(a)* schools, *(b)* nurseries and *(c)* hospitals. [208965]

Yvette Cooper: The precautionary approach recommended by the Independent Expert Group on Mobile Phones' report in 2000 has provided the basis for Government policy. The Group's report did not recommend a ban on the construction of mobile phone masts near schools or any other site. What the report did do was make some specific recommendations for precautionary action for the use of mobile technology. The Government accepted the precautionary approach advised by the Group and have adopted a range of specific actions.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

A3 Hindhead

Virginia Bottomley: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when the South East England Development Agency was first informed of the Department of Transport's intention to downgrade the A3 Hindhead tunnel scheme. [209513]

Mr. Jamieson: I have been asked to reply.

The proposed Hindhead improvement scheme has not been downgraded, it has been classified as a scheme of regional importance. This was announced in the Highways Agency's Press Release of 1 December 2004. The South East England Development Agency was not separately notified of this decision.

Avient

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what evidence the National Contact Point for the OECD Guidelines drew upon in reaching the conclusion that the UN had supplied neither further details nor evidence of specific actions undertaken by Avient crews when preparing its statement on Avient; and what assessment was made in drawing up the statement of allegations by the UN Panel of Experts of *(a)* bombing raids and *(b)* dealings with Mr. Leonid Minim by Avient. [200749]

Mr. Alexander *[holding answer 29 November 2004]*: The statement made by the National Contact Point (NCP) for the OECD Guidelines on Avient drew, in part, on documentation provided by the UN. The UN has required the Government to maintain the confidentiality of that documentation. In making a statement, the NCP reflected the allegations made by the UN panel and the response of the company.

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make an assessment of the extent to which the statement on Avient by the UK National Contact Point for the OECD Guidelines accords with Government policy on mercenary operations in Africa. [200753]

Mr. Alexander: The statement made by the National Contact Point for OECD guidelines is consistent with the policy of HMG towards Private Military and Security Companies.

Following the growth in the size and importance of the UK private security industry operating overseas my right hon. friend the Foreign Secretary has recently instituted a further detailed review of options for regulation of Private Military and Security Companies. The Government will keep Parliament fully informed of its thinking in this area.

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what interpretation she places on the reference in the statement on Avient by the UK National Contact Point for the OECD Guidelines that Avient's M124 attack helicopter crew was involved in the relief of isolated places. [200754]

Mr. Alexander: Avient have admitted they supplied, but did not task, a helicopter crew for the recognised government of the Democratic Republic of Congo to support military operations. Avient were informed later that the crew were used in the relief of Kigali from rebel forces.

In its Statement the NCP recommended that in their future activities, Avient

> "Respect the human rights of those affected by their activities consistent with the host government's international obligations and commitments."

CAB Funding

Mr. Waterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will ensure that funding for Citizens Advice bureaux is ring-fenced. [209325]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Each Citizens Advice Bureau is an independent charity and organises its own funding. The largest contribution frequently comes from local authorities, but most bureaux also gain funding from a number of other sources.

My Department does not fund any individual bureau directly, nor do I have any say in how local authorities control their budget allocation. That would be a matter for my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister.

Mr. Waterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what her policy is on the existence of a national network of Citizens Advice Bureaux; and if she will make a statement. [209326]

Mr. Sutcliffe: My Department funds Citizens Advice and Citizens Advice for Scotland. These are the organisations that support the national network of bureaux by providing training, setting standards for membership, conducting social policy research and producing the database of advice that is used by the network.

Criminal Offences

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will list the criminal offences created in legislation sponsored by her Department in the *(a)* 2002–03 and *(b)* 2003–04 session, broken down by Act. [206877]

Ms Hewitt: The information requested is as follows:

2002–03 Session

Act	*Section*	*Offence*
Communications Act 2003(except Parts 3 and 4, which were sponsored by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport)	43	Providing an electronic communications network or electronic communications service, or making available any associated facility while the entitlement to do so is suspended by a direction under section 42 or is in contravention of a restriction contained in such a direction
	103 (1)	Providing an electronic communications network or electronic communications service, or making available any associated facility while the entitlement to do so is suspended by a direction under section 98(4) or 100; or is in contravention of a restriction contained in such a direction

2002–03 Session

Act	*Section*	*Offence*
	103 (2)	Supplying electronic communications apparatus while prohibited from doing so by a direction under section 101; or in contravention of a restriction contained in such a direction
	125	Dishonestly obtaining an electronic communications service which is done so with intent to avoid payment of a charge applicable to the provision of that service
	126	Having possession of or under their control anything that may be used for obtaining an electronic communications service; or in connection with obtaining such a service
	127	Sending by means of a public electronic communications network a message or other matter that is grossly offensive or of an indecent, obscene or menacing character; or causes any such message or matter to be so sent
	133	Providing an electronic communications network or electronic communications service, or making available any associated facility while the entitlement to do so is suspended by a direction under section 132; or in contravention of a restriction contained in such a direction
	143 (1)	Providing an electronic communications network or electronic communications service, or making available any associated facility while the entitlement to do so is suspended by a direction under section 140; or in contravention of a restriction contained in such a direction
	143 (2)	Supplying electronic communications apparatus while prohibited from doing so by a direction under section 141; or in contravention of a restriction contained in such a direction
	144 (1)	Failing to provide information in accordance with a requirement of Ofcom under section 135 or 136
	144 (3)	Providing any information (required under section 135 or 136) that is false in any material particular; and at the time it is provided, the person either knows it to be false or is reckless as to whether or not it is false
	171	Failure to provide information in accordance with a requirement of Ofcom under this section
	171	Providing information that is false and at the time it is provided it is known to be false or is reckless as to whether or not it is false
	393	Disclosure of information in contravention of section 393

2003–04 Session

Act	*Section*	*Offence*
Civil Partnership Act 2004	32 (1)(a)	Giving information by way of evidence in response to a requirement under section22(1), knowing that the information is false
	32 (1)(b)	Giving a certificate as provided for by section 22(3), knowing that the certificate is false
	32 (2)	A person in his actual or purported capacity as a civil partnership registrar officiates at the signing of a Registrar General's licence by proposed civil partners knowing that he does so:- *(a)* at a place other than the place specified in the licence, *(b)* in the absence of a civil partnership registrar, *(c)* after the end of 1 month from the day on which the notice of proposed civil partnership was given, or *(d)* even though the civil partnership is void under section 49*(b)* or *(c)*

2003-04 Session

Act	*Section*	*Offence*
	33 (1)	Refusal or failure of civil partnership registrar to comply with the provisions of Chapter 1 or of any regulations made under section 36
	33 (3)	Refusal or without reasonable cause omits to record information required to be recorded under section 2(4)
	33 (5)	Recording in the register information relating to the formation of a civil partnership by the signing of a civil partnership schedule, knowing that the civil partnership is void under section 49*(b)* or *(c)*
	33 (7)	Recording in the register information relating to the formation of a civil partnership by the signing of a Registrar General's licence, knowing that the civil partnership is void under section 49*(b)* or *(c)*
	80	Making or signing a false statement to procure the formation of a civil partnership
	100 (1)	Registering in Scotland as the civil partner of another person knowing that either or both are already married or are in a civil partnership.
	100 (2)(a)	Knowingly falsifying or forging any civil partnership document
	100 (2)(b)	Using, giving or sending to any person as genuine, any false or forged civil partnership document
	100 (2)(c)	A person being an authorised registrar, purports to register two people as civil partners of each other before any civil partnership schedule available to him at the time of registration has been duly completed
	100 (2)(d)	A person not being an authorised registrar, conducts himself in such a way as to lead intended civil partners to believe that he is authorised to register them as civil partners of each other
	100 (2)(e)	A person being an authorised registrar, purports to register two people as civil partners of each other without both of them being present
	100 (2)(f)	A person being an authorised registrar, purports to register two people as civil partners of each other in a place other than a registration office or a place agreed under section 93
	158	Any registrar who signs a civil partnership schedule in the absence of the civil partners
	204	Making or signing a false statement to procure the formation of a civil partnership (Northern Ireland)
	Schedule 16 paragraph 26(4)	Failure, without reasonable excuse, to give notice as required by sub-paragraph (3)
	Schedule 16 paragraph 27(9)	Failure, without reasonable excuse, to give notice as required by sub-paragraph (8)
Companies (Audit, Investigations and Community Enterprise Act 2004	8	Knowingly or recklessly making to an auditor of a company a statement (oral or written) that conveys or purports to convey any information or explanations which the auditor requires, or is entitled to require, under section 389A*(1)(b)*, which is misleading, false or deceptive in a material particular
	8	Failure to comply with a requirement under section 389A*(1)(b)* without delay
	8	Failure of a company to comply with section 3 89A(5)

2003–04 Session

Act	*Section*	*Offence*
	9 (3)	Making a misleading statement or knowing such a statement was misleading, and failing to prevent such a statement from being made
	11	Contravention of Section 245E (1) or (2)
	11	Contravention of 253E (1) or (2)
	11	Disclosure of information in contravention of section 245G
	23	Intentional obstruction of a person lawfully acting under Section 453 A (2) or (4)
	45	Failure of a company to comply with Section 45 (10)
	48	Contravention of an order under Section 48 (2) or (3)
	59	Disclosure of information in contravention of a restriction imposed under 59 (8)
	Schedule 6, paragraph 6	Improper use of "community interest company" and "community interest public limited company" or its Welsh equivalent ("cwmni buddiant cymunedol cyhoeddus cyfyngedig")
	Schedule 7, paragraph 5 (2)	Knowingly or recklessly providing information which is false in a material particular
Energy Act 2004	97 (1)	Entry of a vessel in a safety zone in contravention of section 96(1)
	97 (3)	A person who carries on an activity wholly or partly in a safety zone in contravention of section 96(2)
	97 (4)	Contravention of a condition granted for the purposes of section 96
	98	Commission of an offence under Section97 by persons other than by owner or master of vessel
	107	Failure without reasonable excuse to comply with a notice under section107(5)
	109	Taking any measures for decommissioning not in accordance with the programme or with the agreement of the Secretary of State
	110	Failure to comply with a notice under section 110
	Schedule 22	Wilful alteration, suppression or destruction of a document required to be produced under paragraph 8

Debt Recovery

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many recovery actions have been completed by the Export Credits Guarantee Department in each year since 1997; how much has been recovered; and how much is unrecoverable. [208425]

Mr. Alexander *[holding answer 17 January 2005]*: The following table shows the amount that ECGD has recovered in each financial year since 1997. The nature of ECGD's business means that recovery of individual claims paid is invariably spread over very many years. The information regarding completed action is not therefore available in the form requested.

	£ million
1997–98	510.9
1998–99	429.3
1999–2000	362.0
2000–01	441.3
2001–02	503.5
2002–03	490.0
2003–04	564.1
As at 31 December 2004	437.8

As at the end of the 2003–04 financial year, ECGD had an outstanding Gross Claims Balance of £5.8 billion, excluding interest in respect of outstanding Paris Club debts. Against this a sum of £3.1 billion was set as an accounting provision, representing a prudent estimate of that proportion of outstanding claims that may later prove not to be recoverable.

Departmental Staff

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what percentage of her Department's staff is based in London. [208037]

Ms Hewitt: The Lyons Independent Review of Public Sector Relocation, published in July 2004, stated that 32 per cent. of staff in the DTI Group were based in London and the South East.

EU Constitution

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will define *(a)* free and *(b)* undistorted competition as required by article I–3(3) of the proposed EU Constitution. [208085]

Mr. Alexander: The references to "free" and "undistorted" competition in Article I–3(3) of the new Constitutional Treaty are both widely used and widely understood in outlining the aims of competition policy. They are terms used in Articles 3*(l) (g)* and 4 of the current treaty. EU competition policy aims to create and maintain a system which promotes undistorted competition within an economic area free from anti-competitive practices and, through its monitoring and investigative powers, bans cartels, prohibits the abuse of dominant positions on the functioning of markets, exercises merger controls, controls on State subsidies and has responsibility for liberalising markets".

Gas Supplies (Business Risk)

Mr. Bill O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what action she is taking to assist industry and businesses with high gas use to manage their business risk; and if she will make a statement; [209350]

(2) if she will take action to introduce an efficient and competitive forward wholesale gas market; [209351]

(3) what discussions she has had with UK Offshore Operations Association to develop a UK forward gas market; and if she will make a statement; [209352]

(4) if she will take action to help large industrial users to compete in the forward wholesale gas market. [209398]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: Great Britain has the most highly developed forward gas market in the European Union.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State met representatives of energy intensive users before Christmas and agreed that officials work with industry to develop ideas for improving the operation of the forward gas market and to report back. This will include discussions with some large gas producers about their views on the forward gas market. The strategy that businesses adopt to manage their risk is a commercial matter for the companies themselves.

Heating Oil Tanks

Mr. Djanogly: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what information she has collected on the number of tanks to contain heating oil sold on the domestic market in each year since 1997. [209640]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: DTI does not collect this information.

Parking Spaces

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many car parking spaces are provided for those *(a)* working in and *(b)* visiting her Department. [208933]

Ms Hewitt: There are 118 car parking spaces in total on the DTI London estate.

Of these, 53 spaces are allocated on a renewable basis to staff and contractors for reasons of official business, disability or welfare. This is a substantial reduction from the 103 allocated places in November 2002 The remainder are available on a daily basis for visitors and staff with an occasional business need.

Secondment

Alan Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will list the people working within her Department on secondment from the private sector, broken down by *(a)* the organisation or industry they came from and *(b)* the policy responsibilities they have been given. [208621]

Ms Hewitt: The table shows all the people currently working in the Department of Trade and Industry on secondment from the private sector. The table indicates the organisation they came from and the name of the DTI directorate to which the secondee is attached.

Name	*Organisation name*	*DTI directorate*
Professor Christine Adams	SIRA Ltd.	Technology Innovation and Sustainable Development
Mr. Martyn Allen	BAE Systems	UK Trade and Investment
Ms Rita Barallon	LGC Ltd.	Technology Innovation and Sustainable Development
Mr. Mike Barradell	KPMG	Business Relations 1
Mr. Frederick Bassnett	Raylian London Ltd.	UK Trade and Investment
Ms Fahima Begum	BT plc	Business Relations 2
Mr. Norman Bolton	TUV NEL Ltd.	Technology Innovation and Sustainable Development
Ms Debbie Boswell	British Jewellery and Giftware Federation	UK Trade and Investment
Mr. Edwin Bowles	Exploration Consultants Ltd.	UK Trade and Investment
Ms Sara Brazendale	Reuters Ltd.	Business Relations 2
Mr. David Brooks	BP plc	Business Support
Ms Jennifer Churchward	Ernst and Young	UK Trade and Investment
Mr. Peter Concannon,	FaberMaunsell	Business Relations 2
Mr. Graham Cook	PKF	Regions

Name	*Organisation name*	*DTI directorate*
Mr. Brian Nicholas Cook	UK PIA	Energy Markets Unit
Mr. David Crookes	RWE npower plc	Energy Innovation and Business Unit
Mr. Adam Dawson	Shell Information Technologies International	Business Support
Mr. Mark Donougher	Pricewaterhouse Coopers	UK Trade and Investment
Dr. Ian Downey	Science Systems (Space) Ltd.	British National Space Centre
Ms Melanie Evans	BAE Systems Plc	Business Relations 1
Mr. Paul Fawcett	HSBC Bank plc	UK Trade and Investment
Dr. Andy Feest	AEA Technology plc	Business Relations 1
Dr. Hilary Hartigan	NPL Management Ltd.	Technology Innovation and Sustainable Development
Mr. Nick Heyes	Marine Electronic Services Ltd.	Business Relations 1
Mr. Christopher Hill	Shell UK Exploration and Production	Energy Innovation and Business Unit
Ms Judith Hopson	Marine Electronic Services Ltd.	Business Relations 1
Mr. Thomas Huang	British Nuclear Fuel plc	UK Trade and Investment
Mr. Robert Hudson	Hyder Consulting Ltd.	UK Trade and Investment
Mr. Marcus Jackson	Ernst and Young	Regions
Ms Rosie Janes	BDO Stoy Hayward LLP	Corporate Law and Governance
Dr. James Johnstone	NPL Management Ltd.	Technology Innovation and Sustainable Development
Miss Alexia Jones	Deluca	UK Trade and Investment
Mr. Errol Levy	Astrium UK Ltd.	British National Space Centre
Mr. Jonathan Lonsdale	Ecotec Research and Consulting Ltd.	Business Relations 1
Ms Carolyn Luke	BAE Systems plc	Business Relations 1
Dr. Christopher Mansfield	Shell UK Exploration and Production	Energy Markets Unit
Mr. Richard Mrowicki	British Nuclear Fuel plc	Energy Industries Technologies Unit
Mr. Noah Myers	URS Corporation Ltd.	Business Relations 1
Mr. Allan Ockenden	Mott MacDonald Group Ltd.	UK Trade and Investment
Mr. Ray Parkinson	British Nuclear Fuel plc	Energy Industries Technologies Unit
Mr. Phillip Patterson	Association of Independent Music Ltd.	UK Trade and Investment
Dr. Robert Quarshie	Corus Group plc	Business Relations 1
Ms Magdalena Roel	BP plc	Europe and World Trade
Mr. Mark Russell	KPMG	Regions
Ms Manjit Sahota	BAE Systems plc	Business Relations 1
Mr. Robin Sellers	British Nuclear Fuel plc	Energy Industries Technologies Unit
Mr. Michael Shanks	RWE Innogy plc	Business Relations 1
Mr. Garth Shephard	Envisage Ltd.	Office of Science and Technology / Transdepartmental Science and Technology
Ms Elaine Simpson	British Nuclear Fuel plc	Energy Industries Technologies Unit
Mr. Martyn Skinner	Tate and Lyle plc	UK Trade and Investment
Mr. Robin Sloan	Ove Arup and Partners	UK Trade and Investment
Mr. James Stephens	BAE Systems plc	Business Relations 1
Mr. Gordon Stevenson	Lee and Alien Consulting Ltd.	Corporate Law and Governance
Mr. Risto Talas	Maritime and Underwater Consultants Ltd.	UK Trade and Investment
Mr. Peter Tandy	British Nuclear Fuel plc	Energy Industries Technologies Unit
Mr. Gary Taylor	British Nuclear Fuel plc	Energy Industries Technologies Unit
Mr. John Vernon	Drinks Marketing Consortium Ltd.	UK Trade and Investment
Mr. John Vimpany	Exhibition Consultants Ltd.	UK Trade and Investment
Mr. John von Speyr	DSL Consultants Ltd.	UK Trade and Investment
Mr. David Warner	British Nuclear Fuel plc	Energy Industries Technologies Unit
Mr. Frank Watson	IBM (UK)	Office of Science and Technology / Transdepartmental Science and Technology
Mr. Jeremy Webb	Pricewaterhouse Coopers	Shareholder Executive
Mr. David Williams	Gilbert Gilkes and Gordon Ltd.	UK Trade and Investment
Ms Barbara Wilson	Corgi Hosiery Ltd.	UK Trade and Investment
Mr. Gordon Wright	BAE Systems plc	UK Trade and Investment
Mr. John Wright	Kellogg Brown and Root Ltd.	UK Trade and Investment

Sickness Absence

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many days sick leave were taken by civil servants in the Department in each year since 1997; and what the sickness absence rate was in each year. [204510]

Ms Hewitt: The following table sets out the number of days sick absence and average absence rates in DT HQ and the Small Business Service between years ending 31 March 2000 and 31 March 2004. Earlier information is not readily available and would incur disproportionate cost to obtain.

Population: DTI HQ including SBS

		Headcount		Full-time equivalent	
Year ending 31 March	*Days sick absence*	*Staff-in-post*	*Average sick absence*	*Staff-in-post*	*Average sick absence*
2004	43,229	5,395	8.0	5,240.5	8.2
2003	37,948	5,406	7.0	5,247.4	7.2
2002	36,576	5,255	7.0	5,115.0	7.2
2001	33,635	4,986	6.7	4,855.0	6.9
2000	32,708	4,932	6.6	4,818.6	6.8

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Burma

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make it his policy to support requests by representatives of ethnic national groups in Burma, including the Shan, Karen and Karenni, to address the United Nations General Assembly and other UN forums. [209054]

Mr. Alexander: We fully support the representatives of Burmese ethnic groups addressing UN bodies which are mandated to accept their evidence. In general, only UN member states and observer states are able to address the UN General Assembly. However evidence provided to other UN Committees and Working Groups, and at UN General Assembly side-events, can help raise the awareness of UN members to the human rights abuses that are taking place in Burma. The UK also played a key role in drafting last year's UN General Assembly Human Rights Resolution on Burma. The Resolution, adopted by the UN in December, condemned the many human rights abuses in the country, including against ethnic groups.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what representations he has made to the Association of South East Asian Nations to urge the Government of Burma to allow unrestricted access to independent human rights monitors and humanitarian aid organisations to all parts of Burma; [209056]

(2) he will urge the Government of Burma to allow unrestricted access for independent human rights monitors and humanitarian aid organisations to all parts of Burma. [209057]

Mr. Alexander: Securing increased access to all areas of the country for independent human rights monitors and humanitarian aid organisations is an important objective. We are working with international organisations such as the UN and the Association of South East Asian Nations to encourage the Burmese authorities to allow this.

We welcome the decision by the regime to allow the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees access to eastern parts of Burma.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what representations he has made to the Government of Burma about the imprisonment of *(a)* Huiun May Aung and *(b)* Dr. Zaw Myint Maung; [209058]

(2) what representations he has made to the Government of Burma about the imprisonment of Aye Myint Than. [209060]

Mr. Alexander: I met the Burmese Ambassador on 29 November and called for the release of all political prisoners in Burma. My statement on 30 November also called for the release of all political prisoners. A copy of the statement is available on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website: www.fco.gov.uk/policy/news/press-releases.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many political prisoners are on death row in Tharawaddy prison in Burma. [209059]

Mr. Alexander: We understand from the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners that there are six such prisoners, but we do not have independent corroboration of this.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) if he will make representations to the International Committee of the Red Cross to monitor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's well-being through regular visits; [209061]

(2) what discussions he has had with the National League for Democracy in Burma about the medical condition of Aung San Suu Kyi; [209064]

(3) what representations he has made to the Government of Burma about *(a)* the reduction and *(b)* the withdrawal of Aung San Suu Kyi's security detail; [209065]

(4) if he will make representations to the State Peace and Develoment Council in Burma *(a)* to allow Daw Aung San Suu Kyi free access to her personal physician, *(b)* to end the intimidation and harassment of that physician and *(c)* to permit the National League for Democracy Youths to remain in Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's compound to take care of her; [209072]

(5) if he will issue a public statement expressing concern about the safety and health of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and emphasising that the Burmese military is responsible for her safety and health. [209251]

Mr. Alexander: I am deeply concerned that the Burmese military government has formally extended Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's house arrest for another year. As I made clear on 30 November 2004, her continued detention is completely unjustified and unacceptable. A copy of my statement is available on the Foreign and

Commonwealth Office website: www.fco.gov.uk/policy/news/press-releases. We have repeatedly called for her immediate release, most recently when I met the Burmese Ambassador on 29 November 2004, and we will continue to raise the issue with the Burmese authorities. We and our EU and international partners as well as the UN and other international agencies and the Association of South East Asian Nations have all called for the restrictions on her to be lifted.

In the meantime our Embassy in Rangoon monitors the situation closely and maintains contact with the National League for Democracy, including in regard to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's state of health. Her doctor is able to visit her occasionally and I agree with the hon. Member that the State Peace and Development Council is responsible for her safety and health, as it is for the safety and health of all political prisoners in Burma.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will seek to put the conduct of the Government of Burma on the agenda of the United Nations Security Council as a regional and international concern on the grounds of *(a)* crimes against humanity, *(b)* the refugee situation in neighbouring countries and *(c)* involvement in the narcotics trade. [209073]

Mr. Alexander: We have raised our concerns on the situation in Burma with our Security Council Partners. However, there is no consensus at present to bring Burma before the Security Council.

China

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what stance the Government took on the decision of the EU to lift the arms embargo on China. [209605]

Mr. Rammell: The Government supported the decision of the European Council in December 2003 to review the EU Arms Embargo on China. This review is ongoing.

The European Council in December 2004 discussed the embargo. The UK and partners invited the Luxembourg Presidency of the EU to take forward work on the review. The Government could envisage embargo lift subject to satisfaction on the issues laid out in the Conclusions of that Council.

Until the review process is complete, the Government continues to implement the Arms Embargo as set out by the then Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the late Derek Fatchett, in his reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Gedling (Vernon Coaker) on 3 June 1998, *Official Report*, columns 240- 41.

Correspondence

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he will reply to the letter dated 29 November 2004 from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to Mr. Z. Azi. [208704]

Mr. Mullin: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary replied on 17 January.

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he will reply to the letter dated 15 November 2004 from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to Samiul Alam. [208705]

Mr. Mullin: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary replied on 7 December.

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he will reply to the letter dated 9 November 2004 from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to S. Hameed. [208712]

Mr. Mullin: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary replied on 20 December.

Departmental Costs

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what his estimate is of the cost of *(a)* ministerial cars and drivers and *(b)* taxis for his Department in each of the last two years. [200844]

Mr. Rammell: The information is as follows:

	£
Financial Year 2002–03	
Radio Taxis (Black Cabs)	150,028.36
Mastercars	146,244.85
Raffles (Hanslope Park)	202,891.01
Total spend on taxi contracts in Financial Year 2002–03	499,164.22
Financial Year 2003–04	
Radio Taxis/Addison Lee	125,590.46
Mastercars	103,207.04
Raffles	183,371.18
Total spend on taxi contracts in Financial Year 2003–04	412,168.68

To give estimates of the cost of taxis for our overseas missions could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Nick Matheson, Chief Executive of the Government Car and Despatch Agency has at the request of my hon. Friend the Minister for the Cabinet Office (Mr. Miliband) written to the hon. Member with details of the cost of ministerial vehicles provided to this Department in 2003–04. I also refer the hon. Member to the reply the Minister for the Cabinet Office gave him on 10 January 2005, *Official Report*, columns 85–87W.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the running costs of the Department were in each year since 1997, broken down by *(a)* electricity, *(b)* water, *(c)* gas, *(d)* telephones, *(e)* mobile telephones and *(f)* televisions. [206683]

Mr. Rammell: The running costs for the years were as follows:

£000

	1999–2000	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
(a) Electricity	7,545	8,490	9,501	9,184	9,570
(b) Water	1,515	1,555	1,737	1,559	1,586
(c) Gas	780	937	931	1,064	1,091
(d) Telephones	12,281	12,882	12,441	14,714	12,823
(e) Mobile telephones	—	—	—	4	55

Notes:

1. Figures prior to 1999–2000 are not available on a comparable basis.

2. The cost of mobile telephones was accounted for separately from telephones only from the year 2002–03.

3. The running costs of televisions are not identifiable from the accounting records.

Entry Clearance Officers

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many Entry Clearance Officers are working in *(a)* Pakistan, *(b)* India and *(c)* Sri Lanka. [208746]

Mr. Mullin: There are 38 Entry Clearance Officers (ECOs) currently working in Pakistan. India also has 38 ECOs and Sri Lanka has seven. These figures are accurate as of 12 January.

European Constitution

John Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what provision the *(a)* European Commission, *(b)* European Parliament and *(c)* European Union agencies have made for providing information to the public on the constitutional treaty for the European Union; and what steps he is taking to ensure that it is politically neutral. [208560]

Mr. MacShane: The Institutions of the European Union are responsible for their own activities in terms of providing information to the public, though they have made clear that any activities in the UK will be agreed with HMG. The Staff Regulations of Officials of the European Communities, adopted on 1 May 2004, state that staff must act objectively and impartially. Further details can be obtained from the UK Representations of the European Union's Institutions, contact details of which can be found at www.cec.org.uk, www.europarl.org.uk and www.europe.eu.int.

John Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will take steps to ensure that the proposed referendum on the Constitutional Treaty for the European Union will not be held on the same date as elections to *(a)* local authorities, *(b)* devolved assemblies, *(c)* Parliament and *(d)* the European Parliament. [208538]

Mr. MacShane: No decision has yet been taken about when a referendum on the European Union Constitution will take place.

John Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he has taken to ensure that information issued by his Department on the Constitutional Treaty for the European Union is neutral. [208558]

Mr. MacShane: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office works to ensure that all information it issues on the subject of the EU and the EU Constitutional Treaty is objective, explanatory and is in line with and supports Government policy.

John Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the European Commission on the provision of information regarding the constitutional treaty for the European Union. [208559]

Mr. MacShane: Ministers and officials from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office are in regular contact with the European Commission and its Representation in London regarding the Commission's information role regarding EU issues in the UK.

External Suppliers

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many tenders were let by his Department to external suppliers in the financial year 2003–04; and what the value was. [209095]

Mr. Rammell: We are unable to provide the exact information required due to the disproportionate cost of collating the data from all our posts overseas. However, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office did spend a total of £392 million on the procurement of goods and services in 2003–04.

Foreign Students

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when the guidelines to Entry Clearance Officers on the granting of visas to foreign students were last revised; and for what reasons. [208333]

Mr. Mullin: The Diplomatic Service Procedures Volume 1 provides guidelines for Entry Clearance Officers on the granting of visas and includes a Chapter (Chapter 12) on "Entry for Studies". Volume 1 is currently being reviewed to ensure that the guidance in all the chapters is consistent with ongoing changes to the Immigration Rules. The revised version will be available on the UKvisas website (www.ukvisas.gov.uk) shortly.

Chapter 12 of Volume 1 was last reviewed in June/July 2004 to ensure that the guidance in all the chapters were consistent with changes to the Immigration Rules.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make it his policy to make publicly available to *(a)* potential students and *(b)* UK educational institutions the guidelines on granting of student visas issued to Entry Clearance Officers overseas. [208335]

Mr. Mullin: The Diplomatic Service Procedures Volume 1 Chapter 12 gives full details for "Entry for Studies" to the United Kingdom. This Chapter gives complete information on the Government's policy on issuing visas to overseas students as well as information for applicants who want to come to the United Kingdom as students. Entry Clearance Officers at Post use the guidance in this Chapter to help assess student visa applications. This Chapter is available on the UKvisas website at www.ukvisas.gov.uk.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent research he has commissioned on consistency among UK embassies in applying the requirements for granting student visas; and if he will make a statement. [208338]

Mr. Mullin: No formal research has been conducted on consistency among UK embassies in applying the requirements for granting student visas. However, Entry Clearance Officers at the UK's visa-issuing posts assess each visa application on its own merits according to the requirements of the UK Immigration Rules. To ensure that Entry Clearance Officers apply the Immigration Rules correctly and consistently, they receive thorough training and are given extensive and detailed guidelines as well as being managed by an experienced Entry Clearance Manager.

Most student visa refusals (those for studies of more than six months) attract an automatic right of appeal. If the applicant decides to appeal the decision to refuse, the Entry Clearance Officer will review the application. If the decision to refuse is upheld, the appeal proceeds to the Immigration Appellate Authority where it is assessed. If the adjudicator determines that the refusal decision was not made in accordance with the requirements of the Immigration Rules then the appeal will be allowed. In this way, the appeals process is an additional safeguard against any inconsistent decision making.

In addition, the Independent Monitor for Entry Clearance annually reviews a random sample of entry clearance refusals that do not attract a right of appeal, including those relating to student applications for visits of less than six months, and reports to my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary.

Mr. Gökce

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with his Turkish counterpart on the case of Turkish Cypriot civil servant Mr. Gökce, who has been dismissed from his post for private comments he made sympathising with the Kurds and the suffering of the Armenians in the 1915 genocide, and criticising the treatment of Greek Cypriots during the invasion of 1974; and if he will make a statement. [209504]

Mr. MacShane: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office is not aware of the details of the case to which you refer, and has therefore not held any discussions on this matter. If additional information can be provided we would be willing to investigate further.

Parking Spaces

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many car parking spaces are provided for those *(a)* working in and *(b)* visiting his Department. [208974]

Mr. Rammell: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has 88 car parking spaces in London, 36 in Croydon, and 907 in Hanslope Park.

The number of car parking spaces provided overseas is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Secondments

Alan Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the people working within his Department on secondment from the private sector, the organisation or industry they came from and the policy responsibilities they have been given. [208626]

Mr. Alexander: A list of secondees from the private sector working in my Department, the name of the seconding organisation and their responsibilities, is contained in the table. Those who have policy responsibilities are marked by an asterix.

Annex A

Name	*Company/organisation*	*Area of responsibility *includes policy responsibility*
Bakhshi Hasan	Bank of England	Deputy Head Economic Policy Department*
Littlewood Jez	Southampton University	Provides research support on Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention—FCO London.
Hinde Julia	Michael John Trust	First Secretary Science and Technology Ottawa*
Porter Dr. Robin	KGP	Science and Technology Counsellor Beijing*
Scott Alison	Gardenex	First Secretary Commercial*
McCarther Aeidin	North West Development Agency	Short term marketing project working with UK Trade and Investment team—Hong Kong
Cooper David	AMS Integrated Systems Division	Short term project UK Trade and Investment—Washington, researching commercial opportunities in marine sector.
Fenton Graeme	Hydro International	Short term research project UK Trade and Investment—Warsaw researching commercial opportunities in water sector
Donougher Mark	PWC	Manager—Global Entrepreneur Programme (UK Trade and Investment London)*
Adams Lew	Strategic Rail Authority	Export Promoter—(UK Trade and Investment)
Allen Martyn	BAE Systems	Export Promoter—(UK Trade and Investment)
Bassnett Fred	Raylian London Limited	Export Promoter—(UK Trade and Investment)
Boswell Debbie	British Jewellery and Giftware Federation	Export Promoter—(UK Trade and Investment)
Bowles Edwin	Exploration Consultants Limited	Export Promoter—(UK Trade and Investment)
Churchwood Jennifer	Ernst and Young	Export Promoter—(UK Trade and Investment)

Annex A

Name	*Company/organisation*	*Area of responsibility *includes policy responsibility*
Crooks Hugh	RASE	Export Promoter—(UK Trade and Investment)
Fawcett Paul	HSBC Bank plc.	Export Promoter—(UK Trade and Investment)
Huang Thomas	BNFL	Export Promoter—(UK Trade and Investment)
Hudson Robert	Hyder Consulting	Export Promoter—(UK Trade and Investment)
Jones Alexia	Deluca	Export Promoter—(UK Trade and Investment)
McArthur Alan	Middlesbrough College	Export Promoter—(UK Trade and Investment)
Ockenden Allan	Mott MacDonald	Export Promoter—(UK Trade and Investment)
Patterson Phillip	Association of Independent Music Ltd.	Export Promoter—(UK Trade and Investment)
Skinner Martyn	Tate and Lyle plc.	Export Promoter—(UK Trade and Investment)
Sloane Robin	Ova Arup	Export Promoter—(UK Trade and Investment)
Speyr von John	DSL Consultants Limited	Export Promoter—(UK Trade and Investment)
Talas Risto	Maritime and Underwater Consultants Ltd.	Export Promoter—(UK Trade and Investment)
Vernon John	Drinks Marketing Consortium Ltd.	Export Promoter—(UK Trade and Investment)
Vimpany John	Exhibition Consultants Ltd.	Export Promoter—(UK Trade and Investment)
Williams David	Gilbert Gilkes and Gordon	Export Promoter—(UK Trade and Investment)
Wilson Barbara	Corgi Hosiery Limited	Export Promoter—(UK Trade and Investment)
Wilson Graham	AMEC plc.	Export Promoter—(UK Trade and Investment)
Wright Gordon	BAE Systems plc.	Export Promoter—(UK Trade and Investment)
Wright John	Kellogg Brown and Root Ltd.	Export Promoter—(UK Trade and Investment)

Sri Lanka

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what access *(a)* representatives of his Department and *(b)* non-governmental organisations have to the northern parts of Sri Lanka under the control of the Tamil region, following the tsunami. [209172]

Mr. Alexander: Staff of the British High Commission in Colombo continue to have access to these areas, and one visited Kilinochchi on 30 December. Many non-governmental organisations (NGOs) operate in the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam controlled areas of North and North East Sri Lanka including key UN agencies such as UNICEF, the UN Development Programme, the UN High Commission for Refugees and the World Food Programme, international NGOs such as Oxfam and Care, and a number of national NGOs including Sewa Lanka, Sarvodaya and the Tamil Rehabilitation Organisation. Following the tsunami, all these organisations took on an emergency focus, providing key support for the emergency, recovery and relief efforts.

Student Visas

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs which UK embassies use procedures for granting student visas which deviate from the usual procedures; and what the reasons are for these exceptions. [208637]

Mr. Mullin: All Entry Clearance Officers at the UK's visa-issuing posts assess each visa application on its own merits in accordance with the relevant paragraphs of the Immigration Act 1971. When assessing student visa applications, Entry Clearance Officers use the guidance in the Diplomatic Service Procedures volume 1 chapter 12, available on the UKvisas website at www.ukvisas.gov.uk. This ensures that all UK posts use the same procedure for issuing visas. While some large posts have special sections dedicated to dealing with student applications, they still follow the same procedures when assessing visa applications.

Sudan

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many representatives of the UK Government were present at the signing of the peace deal between Northern and Southern Sudan in Nairobi. [208307]

Mr. Mullin: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Development attended the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement for Sudan in Nairobi on 9 January. He was accompanied by the UK Special Representative for Sudan, the ambassador to Sudan and our high commissioner to Kenya.

Zimbabwe

Ross Cranston: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what reports he has assessed on the operation of the justice system in Zimbabwe. [207780]

Mr. Mullin: We receive regular reports from our embassy in Harare on the operation of the justice system in Zimbabwe. We have also received the useful reports published by the Bar Council of England and Wales and the International Council of Barristers and Advocates and the Law Society of Zimbabwe. My right hon. Friend the Attorney-General met with a leading Zimbabwe human rights lawyer in November and discussed the justice system in Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe's legal system is increasingly compromised by the government through delays in the operation of the justice system, partisan appointments to the higher judiciary, and the intimidation of judges, magistrates and lawyers.

Ross Cranston: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what action he is taking to encourage steps to improve the justice system in Zimbabwe. [207781]

Mr. Mullin: We and our EU partners regularly make clear to the Zimbabwean Government and its neighbours our concerns about the abuse of justice in Zimbabwe. We continue to press Zimbabwe to return to democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law, and to repeal legislation on media freedom, NGOs and security that is in contradiction with international norms and Zimbabwe's treaty obligations.

WORK AND PENSIONS

APW Electronics (Pension Fund)

Mr. Swayne: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what recent representations he has received regarding the APW Electronics Pension Fund; what assistance will be made available to its members; and if he will make a statement. [208527]

Malcolm Wicks: My right hon. Friend is aware of the difficult situation faced by members of the APW Electronics Pension Fund, and sympathises with their position.

I met members of the APW Electronics Pension Fund and their constituency MPs on 20 December to discuss their concerns about the pension scheme.

The Government believe that solvent employers should ensure that there are sufficient funds in schemes which are winding up to meet the full costs of the rights accrued by scheme members. Regulations came into force on 15 March 2004 that introduce a "full buy-out" requirement to ensure that where a scheme is wound up and its sponsoring employer is solvent, the scheme members are more likely to receive the pensions they expect.

It is also possible for individual scheme members, in certain circumstances, to opt to have some or all of their State Scheme rights restored for the period they were contracted-out, an option that may be pursued by the APW scheme members.

Civil Service Property

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how many items of civil service property within his Department are unaccounted for, broken down by type; [205572]

(2) if he will list the property belonging to his Department that has been *(a)* stolen and *(b)* reported lost in each year since 1997, broken down by type of article. [206373]

Maria Eagle: DWP was formed in June 2001 from Department of Social Security and parts of the former Department for Education and Employment, including the Employment Service. Information prior to June 2001 could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Information is collected only for capital assets, which comprise all IT equipment, regardless of value, as well as other assets with a value of £2,500 or over. Information on the numbers of such assets lost, stolen or unaccounted for in each year since June 2001 is in the table.

	Number
2001–02	1,567
2002–03	1,204
2003–04	1,016

Incapacity Benefit

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many claimants have been in receipt of incapacity benefit in the Easington constituency in each year since 2000. [208987]

Maria Eagle: The information is in the table.

Incapacity benefit and severe disablement allowance claimants in Easington parliamentary constituency

As at August	*Number*
2000	9,800
2001	10,500
2002	10,000
2003	10,300
2004	9,800

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred.

2. Figures include all incapacity benefit and severe disablement allowance (including IB credits only cases).

Source:

IAD Information Centre, 5 per cent. samples

New Deal

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what percentage of people who entered the new deal for *(a)* 50 Plus, *(b)* 25 Plus, *(c)* disabled people and *(d)* lone parents, have found sustained employment (i) in Great Britain and (ii) in each constituency, in each quarter in each year since 2001; and if he will make a statement. [200236]

Jane Kennedy: Information on new deal for disabled people is not available at constituency level. Information on new deal 50 plus is not available at constituency level after March 2003.

A measure of sustainability is not available for new deal 50 plus and new deal for lone parents, therefore tables have been provided showing the proportion of programme starts to job starts.

The available information has been placed in the Library.

Poverty (Wales)

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many households in poverty there have been in Wales in each year since 1998. [208791]

Mr. Pond: Poverty is about more than low income; it also impacts on the way people live—their health, housing and the quality of their environment. The sixth annual "Opportunity for all" report (Cm 6239), published in September 2004, sets out the Government's strategy for tackling poverty and social exclusion and presents information on the indicators used to measure progress against this strategy.

Specific information regarding low income for the United Kingdom is available in "Households Below Average Income 1994–95—2002–03'. It should be noted that the reporting of year on year changes of low-income rates for countries and regions are not reliable.

These publications are available in the Library.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Constitutional Treaty

John Cryer: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what discussions his Department has had with the Electoral Commission regarding the proposed referendum on the Constitutional Treaty for the European Union. [208551]

Mr. Leslie: Some informal discussions have taken place with the Electoral Commission to inform policy in relation to the mechanics of holding the referendum on the European Constitution.

Criminal Justice

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what plans there are to speed up the criminal justice system. [209425]

Mr. Leslie: The Strategic Plan for Criminal Justice 2004–08, laid before Parliament in July 2004, sets out the Government's plans for improving timeliness in the criminal justice system. It includes a number of initiatives such as the increased use of Fixed penalty notices as well as reform of the legal aid system to eliminate time wasting and delay and to focus help and support where it is most needed.

Other specific initiatives include the Criminal Case Management Programme (CCMP), which aims to improve the efficiency of the criminal justice system. As part of the CCMP, the Effective Trial Management Programme aims to reduce the number of ineffective trials by improving case preparation and progression from point of charge through to trial or earlier conclusion.

Moreover, Local Criminal Justice Boards are required to report on their timeliness performance generally and specifically on the timeliness of cases involving persistent young offenders (PYO) where the Government's pledge to reduce the time taken from 142 to 71 days was achieved ahead of target and continues to be met.

Electronic Devices

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many electronic devices are owned by the Department, broken down by type. [207678]

Mr. Lammy: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave on the 12 January 2005, *Official Report*, column. 565W.

The last year that figures are available for my Department is 2004, however they relate only to the number of items of electronic devices that were in use and are not broken down by type of item. Further, they relate to DCA HQ and Associated Offices only, and exclude the court service, which does not hold this information centrally and cannot provide the information without incurring disproportionate costs.

The total number of electronic items owned by my Department in 2004 was 21,410.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs whether the contracts signed by his special advisers differ from the Model Contract for Special Advisers. [207227]

Mr. Leslie: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister on 17 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 753W.

HEALTH

Chiropody

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of access to chiropody services for senior citizens. [209932]

Dr. Ladyman: No assessment has been carried out centrally. There are now 3,809 chiropodists working in the national health service, a 15.9 per cent. increase on 1997. It is for local primary care trusts to decide on priority for access to chiropody.

Down's Syndrome

Mr. Letwin: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will undertake a review of current research on treatment for Down's Syndrome. [207596]

Dr. Ladyman: There are no plans for the Department to undertake a review of current research on treatment for Down's Syndrome.

Fairer Charging Guidance

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has to assess the impact that the fairer charging guidance has had on *(a)* people with disabilities and *(b)* older people whose income is just above the guaranteed income level of income support plus 25 per cent.; and if he will make a statement. [209232]

Dr. Ladyman: Following the guidance should mean that a person whose income is just above the minimum level of income support plus 25 per cent. pays only a small amount in charges. We plan in due course to assess the impact of guidance on "Fairer Charging Policies for Home Care".

Food Supplements Directive

Mr. Tredinnick: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if the Government will use the UK's Presidency of the European Union to renegotiate the Food Supplements Directive. [209168]

Miss Melanie Johnson: It would not be appropriate for discussion on the food supplements directive to be considered as council business during this period as the directive was adopted in July 2002 and applies from 1 August 2005 and the European Commission, at a meeting with the Health Food Manufacturer's Association and the Food Standards Agency on October 2004, stated that it had not received representations from other member states regarding re-opening discussions on the directive.

Homelessness

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the availability of detoxification services for homeless people. [206595]

Miss Melanie Johnson: There has been no formal assessment of the availability of drug or alcohol detoxification services for homeless people.

We are committed to improving strategic planning and commissioning of alcohol services under the alcohol harm reduction strategy and the public health White Paper to improve treatment services. An audit of treatment is being undertaken together with work on models of care for alcohol treatment.

The National Treatment Agency has undertaken a work programme to increase capacity within inpatient detoxification sector for drug misusers. This extra capacity will benefit all drug misusers, including those who are homeless.

Hospitals

John Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what development projects are proposed for St. George's Hospital, Hornchurch within the next three years; and whether a capital programme has been agreed. [208552]

Dr. Ladyman: Plans are proposed for a new primary care resource centre at the site of the St. George's Hospital, Hornchurch. This will be developed through Barking and Havering LIFT (Holdings) Limited, who will raise the necessary capital.

Informal consultation is under way and, subject to the outline business case being approved by the North East London Strategic Health Authority, a formal consultation will be held later this year.

The primary care trust has a capital programme agreed for 2004–05 and 2005–06 but any capital programme relating to the future of St. George's Hospital is subject to approval of the outline business case.

Mr. Wilkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what percentage of the land designated for the Paddington Basin Health Campus is in the ownership of his Department; when he expects it all to be available for the project; and what proportion will be *(a)* bought and *(b)* leased by his Department for this purpose; [209322]

(2) what his estimate is of the total final cost to his Department of the Paddington Health Campus, including VAT and the allowance for inflation; [209353]

(3) what his latest estimate is of the number of beds which will be available to hospital in-patients at the Paddington Basin Health Campus when it becomes operational. [209354]

Dr. Ladyman: The outline business case for the Paddington Health Campus project is currently being considered by the Department and envisages that as well as land already in national health service ownership, additional land is acquired from Paddington Development Corporation Ltd. and Westminster city council.

The land earmarked for the expansion of academic facilities for Imperial College is owned by St. Mary's NHS Trust and amounts to 0.25 hectares. None of the rest of the land required for the Paddington Health Campus is owned by the Department. The outline business case proposes the freehold acquisition of one hectare from Westminster city council and 1.3 hectares on a long lease, of at least 125 years, from Paddington Development Corporation Ltd.

The total costs of construction of the Paddington Health Campus is currently assessed as £789 million at current prices which rises to £1,109 million allowing for value added tax and inflation.

The total number of beds to be built in the Paddington Health Campus is 923.

Mr. Wilkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what his estimate is of the effect upon the Royal Brompton and Harefield NHS Hospital Trust's financial recovery plan of the capital and revenue contributions requested of these hospitals by his Department towards the cost of the Paddington Basin Health Campus. [209355]

Dr. Ladyman: The Trust debated an internal recovery plan at its December board meeting, the papers associated with which are a matter of public record.

The Department has not required that any capital or revenue contributions be made by the Trust towards the cost of the Paddington Health Campus project.

Mr. John Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the report of the finding of a dead body in the lavatories at Solihull Hospital. [203581]

Dr. Ladyman: This matter has been investigated by the police and reported to the coroner. An investigation is being carried out by the Birmingham Heartlands and Solihull NHS Trust.

Mixed Wards

Mr. Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on his Department's policy towards mixed wards in hospitals. [207733]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department has given a clear commitment to improve patient privacy and dignity, and has set three objectives for national health service trusts, which require them to provide single-sex accommodation for hospital in-patients.

We use the term "accommodation" rather than "wards", as this expands the scope of the requirement to segregate men and women to areas which do not fall within the traditional definition of a ward, for example to care environments which are residential in design.

Single-sex accommodation is defined as single-sex sleeping areas, separate bathroom and toilet facilities for men and women and, for those trusts delivering mental health services, safe facilities for the mentally ill. The separation of male and female sleeping areas can be achieved in a variety of ways, including the use of single rooms and combinations of single-sex bays.

The NHS has worked hard to achieve our standards. By December 2003,

> 99 per cent. of NHS trusts provided single-sex sleeping accommodation for planned admissions and have robust operational policies in place to protect: patients' privacy and dignity;
>
> 99 per cent. of NHS trusts met the additional criteria set to ensure the safety of patients who are mentally ill; and
>
> 97 per cent. of NHS trusts provided properly segregated bathroom and toilet facilities for men and women.

The small number of NHS trusts who have yet to achieve the objectives have hospital development works underway, the completion of which will bring them to the required standard.

In some circumstances, such as emergency admissions, the use of mixed-sex accommodation may be unavoidable. This is regrettable, but no hospital will turn a patient away because a bed appropriate to their gender is not immediately available. Good practice indicates that patients in this situation be moved to appropriate single-sex accommodation within 48 hours.

MRI Scanners

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many hours per day MRI scanners were *(a)* in use for NHS neurology services and *(b)* manned by suitably qualified staff in the last period for which figures are available; and what proportion of this time was designated for MS diagnostic purposes; [208846]

(2) what requirements are placed by strategic health authorities on primary care trusts to arrange access to MRI scans for those suspected of having multiple sclerosis; [208850]

(3) against what benchmarks performance in terms of access to specialist multiple sclerosis neurological services is managed. [208851]

Dr. Ladyman: The Department does not collect information on the day-to-day operational management of magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scanners. Qualified staff operate MRI scanners when they are in use.

The Department works with strategic health authorities to assess the demand for diagnostic services such as MRI to benefit all groups of patients including those suspected of having multiple sclerosis (MS).

The National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) has issued clinical guidelines on the management of MS across primary, secondary tertiary and social care settings. The guideline focuses on the quality and configuration of services for people with MS and their carers, and includes specific recommendations around access to specialist neurological services. Local health communities are expected to review their existing service provision for people with MS against the guidelines.

Newspapers/Periodicals

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the *(a)* newspapers and *(b)* periodicals taken by his Department in each year since 1997; and how much the Department spent on each in each year. [207646]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department's library and information service is responsible for central purchasing of newspapers and periodicals for library use and for retention by individual units. Suppliers, who have been chosen by competitive tendering every three to five years are used. New supply contracts were awarded in October 2001, for the supply of newspapers and weekly magazines and for journals.

Expenditure details are kept on a central system but it does not differentiate between expenditure on newspapers and periodicals.

Total expenditure for the period is:

	£
1997–98	415,890
1998–99	423,560
1999–2000	419,490
2000–01	423,160
2001–02	469,880
2002–03	356,510
2003–04	350,036

A list of current newspaper and journal titles taken by the Department's library has been placed in the Library.

Southwark Primary Care Trust

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients in the Southwark Primary Care Trust area referred urgently with suspected breast cancer waited for more than two weeks for an out-patient appointment in each reporting period since January 2002; and if he will make a statement. [207894]

Dr. Ladyman: The information requested is shown in the table.

Breast cancer waiting times following urgent referral

Urgent referrals received within 24 hours

Quarter	*Year*	*NHS trust*	*Percentage compliance with the two week standard*	*Total referrals seen during the quarter*	*Number of patients seen during the quarter by a specialist after 14 days of the decision to refer by their general practitioner*
Q2	2004–05	Guys and St. Thomas' Hospital NHS Trust	100	120	0
Q1	2004–05	Guys and St. Thomas' Hospital NHS Trust	100	145	0
Q4	2003–04	Guys and St. Thomas' Hospital NHS Trust	100	144	0
Q3	2003–04	Guys and St. Thomas' Hospital NHS Trust	100	104	0
Q2	2003–04	Guys and St. Thomas' Hospital NHS Trust	100	92	0
Q1	2003–04	Guys and St. Thomas' Hospital NHS Trust	100	87	0
Q4	2002–03	Guys and St. Thomas' Hospital NHS Trust	100	72	0
Q3	2002–03	Guys and St. Thomas' Hospital NHS Trust	100	83	0
Q2	2002–03	Guys and St. Thomas' Hospital NHS Trust	100	85	0
Q1	2002–03	Guys and St. Thomas' Hospital NHS Trust	96.9	65	2
Q2	2004–05	King's College Hospital NHS Trust	96.9	71	1
Q1	2004–05	King's College Hospital NHS Trust	100	70	0
Q4	2003–04	King's College Hospital NHS Trust	100	97	0
Q3	2003–04	King's College Hospital NHS Trust	100	100	0
Q2	2002–03	King's College Hospital NHS Trust	100	96	0
Q1	2002–03	King's College Hospital NHS Trust	100	68	0

Note:

1. Data available from March 2002 to September 2004

Source:

2004—Cancer Waiting Times Database—prior to this the data was collected via the QMCW Korner return.

Written Answers to Questions

Thursday 20 January 2005

CHURCH COMMISSIONERS

Church Attendance

Mr. Ben Chapman: To ask the hon. Member for Middlesbrough, representing the Church Commissioners what the most recent attendance figures for the Church of England are; and if he will make a statement. [209742]

Sir Stuart Bell: The latest figures for church attendance reveal growth in adult attendance in 2003 in just over half (i.e. 23) of the dioceses in the Church of England. Nationally, this resulted in a small increase of 1 per cent. in attendance.

About 1.7 million people attend a church or cathedral for worship each month; 1.2 million do so each week and 1 million each Sunday.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Special Advocates

23. **Mr. Kidney**: To ask the Solicitor-General what plans the Attorney General has to appoint special advocates under the Anti-terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001 to replace those who have resigned. [209668]

The Solicitor-General: Two other special advocates have already been appointed from the pool of 12 special advocates to act in the cases in which the two who resigned were instructed.

One appellant is without a special advocate because of the resignations but we do not expect there will be any practical difficulties with the process of allocating a special advocate to that case.

The Attorney General will increase the number of special advocates if necessary.

Sentences (Child Sex Offenders)

24. **Ms Dari Taylor**: To ask the Solicitor-General how many unduly lenient sentences for sex offences against children have been referred to the Court of Appeal in the last 12 months. [209669]

The Solicitor-General: Since January last year the Attorney General and I have referred to the Court of Appeal as unduly lenient sentences for sex offences against children 26 cases. The Court of Appeal increased the sentence in 11 and confirmed the original sentence in seven. Eight have yet to be heard.

Crown Prosecution Service

25. **Mr. Allen:** To ask the Solicitor-General pursuant to the answer of 2 December 2004, *Official Report*, columns 206–07W, on the Crown Prosecution Service, whether the review of charging arrangements has commenced. [209670]

The Solicitor-General: In December last year there was a review of the operation in Nottinghamshire of the new charging arrangements whereby the CPS rather than the police make the charge.

Good progress has been achieved, recommendations for improvement were made and the situation is being monitored.

26. **Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Solicitor-General what liaison there has been between the Crown Prosecution Service and the Criminal Justice Board in North Yorkshire. [209671]

The Solicitor-General: The Chief Crown Prosecutor has chaired the board since its inception, and other members of the Crown Prosecution Service locally are working with partner agencies to deliver the board's objectives and targets.

Solid progress has been made. In particular, North Yorkshire has exceeded the target set for it by increasing the number of offenders brought to justice by 20.2 per cent. against its baseline figure. This is also against a background of falling levels of crime recorded in the county, which are down by 12 per cent. in the period January to December 2004 from the same period in the previous year.

Serious Organised Crime Agency

27. **Mr. Heath:** To ask the Solicitor-General if she will make a statement on the role of the prosecutors designated to work with the Serious Organised Crime Agency. [209672]

The Solicitor-General: The Government believe that prosecution will remain central to the successful disruption and dismantling of organised crime groups.

There will be a strong and effective prosecution capability, to provide prosecution services to the Serious and Organised Crime Agency.

The independent prosecution services will be provided by a new cadre of dedicated specialist prosecutors, drawn from the Crown Prosecution Service and the Customs and Excise Prosecutions Office, later the Revenue and Customs Prosecutions Office.

Iraq

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Solicitor-General if the Attorney-General will publish her advice to the Government on the legality of the war in Iraq. [209881]

The Solicitor-General: No. As I indicated in my reply to my hon. Friend of 23 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 78W, there is a long-standing convention, observed by successive Governments, that advice which the Law Officers have given to the Government is not publicly disclosed.

PRIME MINISTER

Iran

Adam Price: To ask the Prime Minister what information he has *(a)* received and *(b)* requested from his US counterpart on US military reconnaissance missions in Iran. [209892]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 8 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 578 during my statement on the EU Summit, to the hon. Member for Rochford and Southend, East (Sir Teddy Taylor)

Iraq (Attorney-General)

Adam Price: To ask the Prime Minister whether paragraph 23 of the Ministerial Code was applied in relation to the complete text of the Attorney-General's advice of 7 March 2003. [209939]

The Prime Minister: The Ministerial Code is a code of conduct and guidance on procedures for Ministers.

Information relating to internal meetings, discussion and advice and the proceedings of Cabinet and Cabinet Committees is not disclosed as to do so could harm the frankness and candour of internal discussion.

Official Residences

Chris Grayling: To ask the Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the arrangements for *(a)* hon. Members and *(b)* Members of the Government occupying official residences to contribute to the running costs of those properties. [209844]

The Prime Minister: The running costs of official residences are the responsibility of the relevant Department.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Prime Minister if he will list the official residences which are occupied by *(a)* hon. Members and *(b)* Members of the Government. [209845]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave the hon. Member for Wealden (Charles Hendry) on 2 November 2004, *Official Report*, columns 180–81W.

There are a number of former Ministers and Prime Ministers who continue to receive special security requirements after leaving office. We therefore take into account the assessment of the threat to them. On this basis, it has been agreed that my right hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield, Brightside (Mr. Blunkett) may continue to have the use of the official residence while his security arrangements are reviewed, and appropriate measures can be put in place.

Treasury Functions (Birt Report)

Mr. Laws: To ask the Prime Minister whether the Government have commissioned a report by Lord Birt on the future functions of Her Majesty's Treasury; and if he will make a statement. [209393]

The Prime Minister: Information relating to internal meetings, discussion and advice is not disclosed as to do so could harm the frankness and candour of internal discussion.

TRANSPORT

Correspondence

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he will reply to the letter dated 29 November 2004 from the hon. Member for Banff and Buchan regarding the working time directive for truck drivers. [209820]

Mr. Jamieson: I replied to the hon. Member's letter on 11 January.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what crèche facilities are provided by his Department; and at what cost. [202421]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department has a variety of child care arrangements in place and is currently assessing the practicalities of introducing child care vouchers through salary sacrifice when the introduction of tax and national insurance benefits come into effect from April 2005. Salary sacrifice will be operated at cost neutral with the cost of operating the scheme being offset by savings in employers national insurance contributions.

The DVLA provides accommodation for a workplace nursery which is managed and run by an external provider. The central department offers a limited number of nursery places at its accommodation in Hastings, shared with ODPM and CSA at a cost of £6,000 per annum.

The Department also alerts staff to a number of play schemes operated during the school holidays and considers requests from staff to work flexibly as part of its wider child care initiatives.

Gym Provision

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many gyms are available to the staff in the Department; and what the cost of providing them was in the last year for which figures are available. [204370]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department provides limited accommodation for gym facilities but has no ongoing costs regarding equipment. Staff may join local sports and social clubs/associations who may operate gym facilities but at no cost to the Department.

Rail Infrastructure (Investment)

Pete Wishart: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he will give for each year since 1995 *(a)* total, *(b)* public and *(c)* private investment in the rail infrastructure in (i) Scotland, (ii) England, (iii) Wales and (iv) Great Britain; and how much was spent on (A) track repair and maintenance, (B) station repair and maintenance, (C) new track, (D) new station facilities, (E) other infrastructure repair and maintenance and (F) new infrastructure in each case; [207800]

(2) if he will give for each year since 1995 *(a)* total, *(b)* public and *(c)* private spending on the rail infrastructure (i) per person and (ii) per track mile in (A) Scotland, (B) England, (C) Wales and (D) Great Britain. [207801]

Mr. McNulty: The information is not available in the format requested. Total Government support for the rail industry is set out in table 6.2 of National Rail Trends and total investment in the rail industry is set out in table 6.4 of that document. A copy of National Rail Trends is available in the Library of the House and can be accessed on the Strategic Rail Authority's website at http://www.sra.gov.uk/pubs2/performance_ statistics/nrt

Pete Wishart: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the maintenance costs for the Forth Rail Bridge were for each year since 2000 *(a)* in total and *(b)* as a percentage of track and infrastructure maintenance costs in (i) Scotland and (ii) Great Britain. [207802]

Mr. McNulty: Network Rail advises that the information is not available in the form requested. However, since 1997 over £30 million has been invested on maintenance and refurbishment of the Forth Bridge.

Pete Wishart: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether Scottish Executive Ministers will have responsibility for *(a)* maintaining and *(b)* paying for the maintenance of the Forth Rail Bridge under his proposals in the Railways Bill. [207803]

Mr. McNulty: Network Rail is responsible for maintaining the Forth Rail Bridge, and for meeting the initial cost of that maintenance. This is not affected by proposals in the Railways Bill. The Department for Transport and Scottish Executive are currently discussing the arrangements for devolving the responsibility for specifying and funding railway infrastructure in Scotland, as proposed in the White Paper 'The Future of Rail'.

Railways

Pete Wishart: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many *(a)* railway stations and *(b)* miles of railway track there are in (i) Scotland, (ii) England and (iii) Great Britain. [207799]

Mr. McNulty: Network Rail advises that there are 2,507 railway stations in Great Britain, of which 341 are located in Scotland and 2,166 are located in England and Wales.

Of the 21,000 miles of track within Great Britain, 2,573 miles are located in Scotland and 18,427 miles are located in England and Wales.

Nick Harvey: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what provision he has made for the rejection of community railways by local communities; [209343]

(2) if he will make a statement on the process by which local communities will be invited to comment on the designation of a railway line as a community railway. [209344]

Mr. McNulty: Before a line is designated as a community rail line, a formal consultation will take place with local authorities, the Rail Passengers Committee, local stakeholders and any existing community rail partnerships involved with the line. If it is found that there is insufficient local support for the proposition, the line will not be designated as a community rail line and will remain a part of the conventional national rail network.

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the progress of the Crossrail project. [209426]

Mr. McNulty: A hybrid Bill seeking powers for the construction and operation of Crossrail will be introduced. An Environmental Statement will be deposited at the same time and will also be available on the internet. Between 10 and 19 February, Cross London Rail Links Ltd. are to undertake an Information Round, which will provide affected parties with further details of the scheme to be set out in the Bill.

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much land which is not part of the rail network Crossrail will need to acquire in order to complete the project. [209427]

Mr. McNulty: The Crossrail Bill will set out in detail the powers of compulsory purchase that are being sought and identify the areas of land over which those powers will be exercised. A Bill will be introduced and will be accompanied by an Environmental Statement which will assess the significant likely environmental effects of the Crossrail scheme.

Railways Bill

Pete Wishart: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether it is his policy that resources allocated to Scottish Executive Ministers as a result of the additional responsibilities to be devolved in the Railways Bill shall be allocated on the basis of *(a)* historic spending, *(b)* planned spending, *(c)* population share and *(d)* share of stations and track miles; and if he will make a statement. [207804]

Mr. McNulty: The methodology and level of resource transfer to the Scottish Executive is the subject of ongoing discussions with the Executive. I hope to be able to make a substantive announcement shortly.

Taxis

Mr. Geoffrey Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what definition he uses of a purpose built taxi. [209472]

Charlotte Atkins: We regard a purpose built taxi as a taxi which meets the Metropolitan Conditions of Fitness (MCF). The MCF were devised by the Licensing Authority for London and set out the criteria which taxis in London must meet.

Underground System

Pete Wishart: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has made of *(a)* capital and *(b)* revenue expenditure (i) in total, (ii) from public and (iii) from private sources for each underground/tube system in the UK in each year since 1995; and what estimate he has made of (A) track, (B) station, (C) other and (D) total repair and maintenance costs for each system in each year since 1995. [207805]

Mr. McNulty: The information is not available in the format requested. The following table sets out London Underground's capital and revenue expenditure.

London Underground capital and revenue expenditure

£ million (outturn prices)

	1995–96	*1996–97*	*1997–98*	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*[1]	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
Capital expenditure[2, 3]	226	176	134	170	252	293	418	402	668
Jubilee Line Extension	587	660	476	283	655	—	—	—	—
Renewals	275	198	191	244	—	—	—	—	—
Total investment	1,088	1,034	801	697	907	293	418	402	668
Of which:									
Capital expenditure by PPP contractors	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	20	476
Revenue Expenditure	624	644	696	785	995	1,156	1,371	1,664	1,930

[1] In April 1999, London Underground adopted new accounting treatment for its investment expenditure which removed the category 'renewals' and reclassified such expenditure as capital or operating costs as appropriate. Therefore the figures up to and including 1998–99 are not directly comparable with those for subsequent years.

[2] This includes the investment in fixed assets undertaken by the infracos under the PPP contracts, for those assets on LUL's balance sheet.

[3] This excludes expenditure on assets provided under the PFI contracts, as they are not on LUL's balance sheet.

Source:

LUL Directors' Report and Accounts

London Underground does not record repair and maintenance expenditure by asset type, but the following table sets out repair and maintenance costs.

London Underground: Repair and maintenance, infrastructure companies costs and private finance initiative contract costs

£ million (outturn prices)

	1995–96	*1996–97*	*1997–98*	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
Repair and maintenance[1]	203	209	207	244	348	—	—	—	—
Infraco Operating Costs[2]	—	—	—	—	—	435	574	617	—
PPP Maintenance and Repair[3]	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	83	824
PFI contract payments[4]	4	12	15	71	117	164	200	226	197
Total	207	221	222	315	465	599	774	926	1,021

[1] These are the costs incurred on maintaining the operational railway prior to the establishment of the Infracos as separate subsidiary companies. The 1999–2000 figure includes £91 million that under the previous accounting policy would have been included in 'Renewals'.

[2] Total operating costs of the Infraco subsidiaries while they remained within the LUL Group, which include all maintenance expenditure in those years.

[3] This is the element of PPP Infrastructure Service Charge allocated which is apportioned to maintenance and included in LUL's profit and loss account.

[4] Costs include the charges for the services provided under the PFI contracts (Connect, Power, British Transport Police accommodation, Prestige and Northern Line Trains). From the date of transfer of Infraco JNP (1 Jan 2003) the Northern Line Trains contract PFI became the responsibility of Tube Lines.

The only other underground system in the UK is Glasgow Underground, which is a devolved responsibility of the Scottish Executive and Parliament and on which the Department does not hold the information requested.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Christmas Cards

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many departmental staff have responsibility for preparing Christmas cards. [205193]

Alun Michael: A member of staff in Defra's Communications Directorate takes on managing the production of Christmas cards as an additional duty as the festive period approaches. There is no additional staff cost. The estimated cost of answering questions on this issue from the right hon. Member is £221 to date.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many hours of staff time were taken up in preparation of Christmas cards in 2004. [205197]

Alun Michael: No record was kept of the time taken by Defra staff to manage the production of Christmas cards but it was minimal and did not involve extra cost.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many official Christmas cards were sent out by her Department in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004. [205200]

Alun Michael: The number of official departmental Christmas cards sent out were as follows:

	Number
2003	7,000
2004	7,000

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what percentage of official departmental Christmas cards included a contribution to charity in their cost; and which charities benefited from such a contribution. [205207]

Alun Michael: None.

Climate Change Levy

Mr. Chaytor: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she expects to respond to the application for climate change levy exemption submitted by the British Apparel and Textile Confederation on behalf of Black Sheep Textiles. [208166]

Mr. Morley: Black Sheep Textiles submitted an incomplete application in April 2004 for a Climate Change Agreement, which are agreements with energy intensive industries whose participants receive an 80 per cent. discount from the CCL Climate Change Levy in return for meeting energy efficiency targets. My officials asked for the outstanding information from the company via the trade association on several occasions so that the application could be processed. The last request was made in September 2004. When the complete application is received, it will be processed within the usual 10 working days.

Darwin Mounds

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of the protection afforded to the Darwin Mounds referred to in her letter of 2 July to the hon. Member for Linlithgow. [206897]

Mr. Bradshaw: Following a request from the Department, on 20 August 2003 the European Commission introduced measures to protect the Darwin Mounds from damaging fishing activities. These restrictions are closely monitored by the Scottish Fisheries Protection Agency. No breaches of the restrictions have been identified.

In April 2005, the Department will outline details of a proposed research project to determine the current condition of the coral reef structures on the Darwin Mounds.

Energy Efficiency

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many households in Hendon have benefited from *(a)* Warm Front and *(b)* Warm Front Plus schemes; how many were pensioners in each case; what the (i) average and (ii) maximum awarded under the scheme was in each case; and if she will make a statement. [207949]

Mr. Morley: Since the launch of the Warm Front scheme in June 2000 and the end of December 2004 approximately 430 households in Hendon received assistance under Warm Front of which 79 were pensioner households.

Some 395 pensioner households received assistance under Warm Front Plus.

The average Warm Front grant to each household was approximately £350 and the average Warm Front Plus grant was approximately £570.

The grant maxima available under Warm Front is £1,500 and £2,500 is available under Warm Front Plus.

Alan Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what proportion of dwellings in England meet or exceed the energy efficiency standard of SAP 65. [209654]

Keith Hill: I have been asked to reply.

On the basis of the 2001 English House Condition Survey, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister estimates that 16 per cent. of the housing stock meets or exceeds SAP 65.

Farm Produce Prices

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the average *(a)* farmgate and *(b)* retail price was of (i) one kilogram of (A) beef, (B) lamb, (C) pork, (D) chicken, (E) turkey, (F) bacon, (G) dessert apples, (H) potatoes, (I) carrots, (J) cauliflower, (K) peas and (L) runner beans, (ii) one pint of (x) milk, *(y)* cream and *(z)* yoghurt, (iii) one dozen eggs and (iv) one litre of (X) English wine and (Y) brandy in (1) 1975, (2) 1980, (3) 1985, (4) 1990, (5) 1995, (6) 2000, (7) 2003 and (8) 2004, broken down by (I) organic and (II) conventionally produced foodstuffs. [204157]

Alun Michael: Where available the farmgate prices and retail prices are shown in the following tables.

While regular price series are not separately available for organically produced food, prices provided by the Soil Association for 2000 are provided.

Differences in the level of processing vary by commodity and over time which will affect the trends shown within the tables.

Retail prices[1]

Product	*Units*	*1975*	*1980*	*1985*	*1990*	*1995*	*2000*	*2003*	*2004*[2]
Beef[3]	p per kg	n/a	n/a	n/a	347	396	380	377	n/a
Lamb[3]	p per kg	n/a	n/a	n/a	310	406	452	518	n/a
Pork[3]	p per kg	n/a	n/a	n/a	206	209	200	228	n/a
Chicken[4]	p per kg	70	148	176	217	204	223	228	231
Turkey[4]	p per kg	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Bacon: gammon[4]	p per kg	167	282	379	472	501	545	575	586

Retail prices[1]

Product	*Units*	*1975*	*1980*	*1985*	*1990*	*1995*	*2000*	*2003*	*2004*[2]
Bacon: streaky[4]	p per kg	125	183	236	291	309	427	n/a	n/a
Apples[4]	p per kg	35	53	71	103	101	108	127	126
Potatoes[4]	p per kg	10	13	18	34	39	32	52	61
Carrot[4]	p per kg	10	29	44	59	54	45	55	58
Cauliflower [4]	p per kg	32	53	86	60	67	61	75	70
Peas	p per kg	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Runner Beans	p per kg	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Milk[4]	p per pint	7	17	23	31	36	34	37	35
Cream	p per pint	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Yoghurt	p per pint	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Eggs[4]	p per dozen	36	159	218	121	138	168	168	169
Wine	p per bottle	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Brandy	p per bottle	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

n/a = Information not available

[1] Prices are consistent with those used in Agriculture in the United Kingdom to calculate the UK farmers' share of the value of a basket of food items.

[2] 2004 figures are provisional

[3] Meat and Livestock Commission UK Market Survey Report, untrimmed prices adjusted for drip loss

[4] Office for National Statistics, average retail prices

Farm-gate prices[1]

Product	*Units*	*1975*	*1980*	*1985*	*1990*	*1995*	*2000*	*2003*	*2004*[2]
Beef[3]	p per kg	n/a	n/a	n/a	198	228	169	175	n/a
Lamb[3]	p per kg	n/a	n/a	175	176	236	196	268	n/a
Pork[3]	p per kg	n/a	87	103	113	119	95	104	n/a
Chicken[4]	p per kg	n/a	n/a	89	96	87	71	68	n/a
Turkey[4]	p per kg	n/a	n/a	141	121	124	130	119	n/a
Bacon[4]	p per kg	n/a	87	103	112	120	95	n/a	n/a
Apples[4]	p per kg	n/a	25	34	51	47	37	59	37
Potatoes[4]	p per kg	n/a	8	5	11	22	9	8	12
Carrots[4]	P per kg	n/a	7	9	19	23	17	25	25
Cauliflower [3]	p per kg	n/a	17	21	24	28	24	28	33
Peas[4]	p per kg	n/a	16	22	22	19	26	29	30
Runner Beans[4]	p per kg	n/a	17	28	48	47	88	75	77
Milk[4]	p per pint	4	7	9	11	14	10	10	n/a
Cream	p per pint	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Yoghurt	p per pint	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Eggs[4]	p per dozen	n/a	44	48	44	39	28	40	n/a
Wine	p per bottle	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Brandy	p per bottle	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

n/a = Information not available

[1] Prices are consistent with those used in Agriculture in the United Kingdom to calculate the UK farmers' share of the value of a basket of food items.

[2] 2004 figures are provisional

[3] Meat and Livestock Commission UK Market Survey Report

[4] Defra

Estimated farm-gate prices of organic produce in 2000

Product	*Units*	*Estimated price*
Beef	p per kg	260
Lamb	p per kg	300
Pork	p per kg	220
Chicken	p per kg	375
Apples	p per kg	100
Potatoes	p per kg	25 to 30
Cauliflower	p per kg	70
Peas	p per kg	257
Milk	p per pint	16 to 17
Eggs	p per dozen	140

Source:
Soil Association

Foot and Mouth

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much money *(a)* was claimed, *(b)* was awarded and *(c)* is contingent liability under foot and mouth financial support; and how much of each of these sums is (i) UK sourced and (ii) European Communities sourced grant. [207127]

Mr. Bradshaw: Claims to the Department following the 2001 FMD outbreak amounted to £20.84 million, of which £2.23 million was awarded. £226,194 still remains as a potential liability.

This money was entirely UK sourced as claims to the Department were ineligible for EU re-imbursement.

GM Products

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what correspondence she has received from the European Food Safety Authority with regard to the safety of GM products; and if she will publish the correspondence. [208977]

Mr. Morley: My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State, has not received any correspondence from the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) concerning the safety of GM products. Defra officials receive regular e-mail updates concerning the status of applications made to EFSA under the provisions of Regulation(EC) 1829/2003 on GM Food and Feed. The content of these updates is publicly available on the EFSA website (http://www.efsa.eu.int/science/gmo/gmffapplications/catindexen.html).

Recently, officials have also received a request from the EFSA GMO panel requesting the provision of national assessment reports produced on applications for the marketing of GMOs under the provisions of Directive 2001/18/EC. These assessment reports have been provided to EFSA. The Competent Authority for Regulation (EC) 1829/2003 in the UK is the Food Standards Agency.

Gully Closures

Mr. Byrne: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the most common causes are of failure of attempts under the relevant legislation to close alleys or gullies. [209176]

Alun Michael: Most applicants have been able to provide clear evidence of the need for designation including evidence from the police, the local crime prevention education partnership and local residents, often backed by representations from councillors and MPs. Of 22 applications received, two were withdrawn. The other 20 were approved and then one was revoked at the request of the local authority concerned.

So far the successful councils have made a total of 18 extinguishment orders. 15 have been confirmed, two are awaiting decisions having been referred to the Secretary of State because objections were received and a third is expected shortly following an objection.

Veterinary Medicines

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the consultation by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate on the draft Regulations to consolidate UK legislation on veterinary medicines. [208268]

Mr. Bradshaw: On 4 January 2005 the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) issued a letter to more than 300 organisations and individuals announcing a formal consultation exercise and inviting comments on the draft Veterinary Medicines Regulations 2005 and associated guidance notes which set out revised controls on veterinary medicines. The new Regulations are intended to implement amendments to EU legislation, carry forward some recommendations of the recent Marsh and Competition Commission Reports on the supply of veterinary prescription only medicines, and to simplify and consolidate existing UK legislative provisions which are currently contained in the Medicines Act 1968 and some 50 statutory instruments. It is proposed to replace these with a single set of Regulations containing all the provisions, which will come into force at the end of October 2005 to comply with the timetable for implementing the amended EU requirements.

The formal consultation exercise follows a series of informal consultation meetings held during the summer and autumn of 2004 with a wide range of organisations at which various aspects of the proposals were discussed. The full consultation package, comprising draft Regulations, 18 draft guidance notes and a draft partial Regulatory Impact Assessment is available on the VMD's website (www.vmd.gov.uk) under "consultations" "current". It is also available from the VMD on CD-ROM or as a paper copy on request. In view of the volume of the package and the wide scope of the Regulations, four months, rather than the standard 12 weeks, is being allowed for comments, which are required by 5 May 2005.

The key changes contained in the proposals include provisions to:

improve the clarity of the requirements;

disapply the Medicines Act 1968 from the regulation of veterinary medicines;

delete unnecessary provisions from current legislation;

make Defra's Secretary of State responsible for veterinary medicines legislation;

permit a veterinary surgeon to dispense another veterinary surgeon's prescription;

introduce a tiered Prescription Only Medicine (POM) distribution system;

allow specified qualified people other than veterinarians to prescribe products in the lower tier;

streamline appeal arrangements;

abolish the five-yearly renewal requirement;

increase data protection periods;

promote the availability of veterinary medicines;

implement an exemption scheme for products for small pets;

extend record-keeping requirements; and

restrict advertising of POM products.

Waste

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many tonnes of waste mercury were produced in *(a)* 1999–2000, *(b)* 2000–01, *(c)* 2001–02 and *(d)* 2002–03; and how much of this was recycled. [206782]

Mr. Morley: A key source of mercury waste arises from the chlor-alkali industry. Annual figures for the three UK mercury cell chlor-alkali plants for the years in question are set out in table 1. Large amounts of mercury will no longer be required when mercury cell plants are decommissioned, although this mercury is pure enough to be re-used without further treatment. Mercury can be present in waste arising from a range of other industries, including from power generation, and mining activities, although there are no aggregated national figures available for these. Mercury is also present in used dental amalgam, some forms of lighting equipment, certain thermometers, thermostats, manometers, some batteries, switches and relays, although the use in all these applications is declining. Implementation of the WEEE Directive and the hazardous waste regulations should encourage the greater recovery and recycling of mercury from these sources.

agencies such as UNICEF, the UN Development and lawyers.

Table 1: Mercury disposal and emissions from UK chlor-alkali plant[1]

kilogrammes

	Mercury in safely deposited wastes
1999	4,109
2000	3,408
2001	3,252
2002	10,994
2003	21,484

[1] This includes all mercury-contaminated materials, such as cell components, process equipment, solid wastes from sumps, pits, demercurisation units and the brine purification process, which have been sent to authorised and properly controlled waste disposal sites.

CABINET OFFICE

Butler Review

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office further to the Prime Minister's answer of 14 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1005W to the hon. Member for Daventry (Mr. Boswell) on the Butler Review, whether there is *(a)* an informal group and *(b)* a formal ad hoc Cabinet Committee to consider policy towards Iraq. [209937]

The Prime Minister: I have been asked to reply.

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 25 October 2004, *Official Report*, column 1024W to my hon. Friend the Member for Liverpool, Walton (Mr. Kilfoyle)

Civil Servants

Dr. Cable: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many senior civil servants left the Government for the private sector and were vetted by the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments during 2004; and if he will list their *(a)* civil service and *(b)* private sector posts. [208518]

Mr. Miliband: Information about applications considered by the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments is published in the Advisory Committee's Annual Reports, copies of which are available in the Library.

Information for the period up to 31 March 2004 is set out in the Committee's sixth report which is available in the Library.

E-mails

Norman Baker: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what his policy is on the deletion of e-mails; when this last changed; and how. [208677]

Mr. Miliband: It is Cabinet Office policy that all emails that form part of the official record must be printed and placed on existing paper files. This includes emails that contribute to the full understanding of a decision or results in action being taken. In December 2004 a three month time limit was introduced in relation to the time emails in inboxes, sent items and deleted items would be kept before automatic deletion.

Norman Baker: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office (1) what guidance he has issued to other departments in respect of the deletion of emails; [208678]

(2) what guidance he issues to Government departments on circumstances under which paper copies may be kept of emails which have been deleted. [208679]

Mr. Leslie: I have been asked to reply.

The Department for Constitutional Affairs has issued guidance to departments on records management, including the management of information held electronically, to all departments—specifically in relation to the full implementation of the Freedom of Information Act on 1 January 2005.

Good records and information management is fundamental to the effectiveness of the Freedom of Information Act. Parliament has recognised this by providing a Code of Practice on the Management of Records under section 46 of the FOI Act.

All the guidance provided to departments is also publicly available on the departmental website at http://www.foi.gov.uk/quidance/proguide/index.htm.

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office if he will make a statement on the Office's policy regarding the retention of e-mails in electronic form *(a)* after and *(b)* up to 1 January 2005; and what instructions have been given regarding the deletion of e-mails prior to 1 January 2005. [206955]

Mr. Miliband: The Department continues to implement well established policies and procedures for the review and disposal of files in accordance with its administrative needs and the Public Records Act.

Email messages that form part of the official record are saved for as long as business needs require and stored corporately in accordance with departmental record management procedures. Further email guidance is available on the National Archives web site at:

http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/electronicrecords/advice/pdf/managing emails.pdf

It is departmental policy that all emails that form part of the record must be printed and placed on existing paper files. This includes emails that contribute to the full understanding of a decision or results in action being taken. In December 2004 a three month time limit was introduced in relation to the time emails in inboxes, sent items and deleted items would be kept before automatic deletion.

Government IT Equipment

Dr. Pugh: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what assessment he has made of the amount of Government IT equipment scrapped in the last 12 months; and what the average age of such equipment was. [207294]

Mr. Miliband: Individual departments are responsible for the disposal of their information technology equipment and no central records are kept.

Record Keeping

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what *(a)* guidelines and *(b)* other regulations have been promulgated since July 2004 on procedures for record-keeping by (i) informal groups and (ii) formal ad hoc Cabinet Committees engaged in considering policy issues. [209938]

Mr. Miliband: The arrangements for recording decisions which are the collective responsibility of Ministers are set out in the Ministerial Code and have not changed since July 2004.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Amusement Arcades

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what reports she has received of difficulties experienced by the proprietors of amusement arcades and similar attractions which undertake joint operations between schedule C and schedule D in ensuring that prohibited persons take no part in activities covered by schedule C; and how many proprietors have *(a)* lost their licenses and *(b)* been prosecuted as a result of such breaches. [209346]

Mr. Caborn: The revoking of licences and bringing prosecutions for breach of licence conditions is a matter for local authorities.

I have received no reports of difficulties experienced by the proprietors of amusement arcades and similar attractions, in ensuring that children and young people do not play category C machines.

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what her policy is on *(a)* the duration of grandfather rights to proprietors of schedule D amusement arcades, *(b)* the grant of such rights to joint operations between schedule C and schedule D and *(c)* the steps which need to be taken by a proprietor to secure for himself such rights as may be granted; and what exceptions to the legislation are to be provided by the grandfather rights. [209347]

Mr. Caborn: Under the Gambling Bill grandfather rights will be granted to all current proprietors of amusement arcade establishments that offer gaming machines under part III of the 1968 Gaming Act.

Where existing arcade premises offer what will become known as category D gaming machines, they will become entitled to receive a family entertainment centre gaming machine permit. Where existing premises offer a mixture of category C and category D gaming machines, they will need to apply for, and be granted an operating licence from the Gambling Commission, and they will be entitled to receive a family entertainment centre premises licence from their local authority.

In all cases, the existing operator will need to apply for the necessary permit or licences, and to pay a fee. In the case of the family entertainment centre gaming machine permit and the family entertainment centre premises licence the grandfather rights mean that the local authority must grant these applications. They will have no power to reject the applications, or to impose conditions which alter the existing rights of the operator. However, all gaming machines must comply with the Bill's requirements on which category of machine may be used (from A to D), and the stakes and prizes for each.

Once grandfathered, the permits or licences will operate in the same manner as any new permit or licence. Therefore, there is no enduring duration of the grandfather rights. For example, should an operator breach the terms of a licence, the Gambling Commission will be able to review it, and may impose a penalty, including the revocation of the licence. The permits have a ten year duration, and that applies to grandfathered permits also.

Public Service Publisher

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what role is envisaged for the proposed public service publisher; what its budget will be; who will fund its establishment; and what plans she has for its relationship with *(a)* the BBC and *(b)* regional independent broadcasters. [209738]

Estelle Morris: The establishment of a public service publisher was a proposal made by Ofcom in Phase 2 of its Public Service Television review. Ofcom has conducted a public consultation on all of its proposals and will publish its final conclusions and recommendations in due course. The Government will of course consider those recommendations very carefully, against the background of BBC Charter Review and other relevant factors.

Theatre

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much lottery funding the Arts Council has committed for theatre building and improvement schemes in each of the last three years; and what proportion of the total Arts Council lottery funding this constituted in each year. [208759]

Estelle Morris: The figures as requested, which have been provided by Arts Council England, are as follows. These do not include spend on multi-purpose arts venues that may also include theatre.

	Arts Council investment in theatre building/improvement (£)	*Total Arts Council lottery grants (£)*	*Proportion of total spend (percentage)*
2001–02	237,000	162,833,277	0.15
2002–03	9,340,702	116,792,619	8.00
2003–04	22,209,805	168,187,878	13.21

TV Licence Fee Evasion

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the most recent television licence fee evasion rates are for the United Kingdom; and what plans she has to publish a regional breakdown of evasion rates. [209118]

column. 565W.

Supplements Directive. [209168]

Estelle Morris: The estimated television licence evasion rate as at the end of March 2004 was 5.7 per cent. The BBC, who produce the evasion estimates and maintain the statistical model on which they are based, have indicated that the data required to produce accurate estimates, much of which relies on external sources, are not available at regional and local levels. The Government therefore have no plans to publish estimates of regional evasion rates.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFFAIRS

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the running costs of the Department were in each year since 1997, broken down by *(a)* electricity, *(b)* water, *(c)* gas, *(d)* telephones, *(e)* mobile telephones and *(f)* televisions. [206673]

Mr. Lammy: The running costs of the Department, which covers costs for the Court Service, the Public Guardianship Office and DCA Headquarters, for *(a)* electricity, *(b)* water, *(c)* gas, *(d)* telephones and *(e)* mobile phones are set out in the following table:

Total DCA

Period	*Electricity*	*Water*	*Gas*	*Telephones*	*Mobile Phones*
1998–99	3,984	779	829	3,635	72
1999–2000	4,137	859	854	4,277	225
2000–01	3,478	722	963	4,454	202
2001–02	3,720	797	1,430	4,257	223
2002–03	3,326	772	1,385	4,674	267
2003–04	3,816	889	1,439	5,323	296
2004–05[1]	2,590	602	767	3,086	222

[1] To 30 November

It is not possible to provide the running costs of the Department for *(f)* televisions without incurring disproportionate cost

Information on 1997–98 is not readily available.

E-mails

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will make a statement on his Department's policy regarding the retention of e-mails in electronic form *(a)* after and *(b)* up to 1 January 2005; and what instructions have been given regarding the deletion of e-mails prior to 1 January 2005. [206954]

Mr. Leslie: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to the hon. Member for Guildford (Sue Doughty) on 10 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 118W.

Magistrates

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the balance of political affiliations is on each of the magistrates benches in *(a)* England and Wales and *(b)* Northern Ireland. [209749]

Mr. Leslie: Political affiliation has not been used as an indicator for balance on the magistrates bench since November 2003 in England and Wales and has never been recorded in Northern Ireland.

Parking Spaces

John Mann: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many car parking spaces are provided for those *(a)* working in and *(b)* visiting his Department. [208971]

Mr. Lammy: This response relates to the DCA HQ estate and associated offices only since the Court Service does not hold any records on this centrally and would have to incur a disproportionate cost to collect the information.

The number of car parking spaces provided for those working in and visiting the DCA HQ estate is 127.

Telephone Usage

Mr. Tyler: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs (1) how many non-geographic 0870 telephone numbers are in use by his Department; and what services can be accessed by calling each of them; [205837]

(2) how much revenue his Department has received from the use of non-geographic 0870 telephone numbers for the period 1 October 2003 to 30 September 2004. [205846]

Mr. Lammy: The Department has 481 0870 numbers on its Goldfax system. This system allows network PC users to receive faxes direct to their desktops in the form of gif files. No revenue is produced from these calls.

The Department's central recruitment unit uses 41 0870 numbers for its recruitment campaigns. The revenue produced from these calls from when the system was set up in December 2003, until 7 October 2004, was £2,615.07

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

African Union Summit (Gabon)

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of the progress made at the African Union summit in Gabon on the issues of *(a)* Cote d'Ivoire, *(b)* Sudan and *(c)* the Democratic Republic of the Congo; and if he will make a statement. [209086]

Mr. Mullin: We welcome the African Union's (AU) endorsement of President Mbeki's peace plan for Cote d'Ivoire, which focuses on the adoption of all texts emanating from the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement; the implementation of the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintergration (DDR) programme; the effective functioning of the National Transitional Government; and the establishment, throughout the country, of a climate conducive to the restoration of peace and stability in Cote d'Ivoire. We hope that the AU's commitment will encourage all sides to work together to bring about a sustainable peace.

purpose,

We support the conclusions of the African Union Peace and Security Council on Sudan. In particular, we condemn the violations of the ceasefire by both sides and have made clear to the parties that they must stop the fighting and co-operate fully with the African Union and the rest of the international community.

We welcome the commitments made by the AU to continue to support the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) peace process and to work towards improving relations between DRC and Rwanda.

Armament Sales (China)

Mr. Wilkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the effect on UK relations with the Republic of Taiwan of approval by the United Kingdom Government of the lifting of the EU's embargo on the sale of armaments to the People's Republic of China. [209943]

Mr. Rammell: We do not recognise Taiwan as a State. Despite having no diplomatic ties we enjoy good relations in areas such as trade, investment, culture and education.

We take every appropriate opportunity to convey to the Taiwanese authorities, through informal channels, and to the Chinese Government our strong opposition to the use of force or to any action that raises cross-straits tensions.

As my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary pointed out to the Quadrapite Committee on 12 January, the European Council meeting in December 2004 emphasised that the result of any decision on the lifting of the EU arms embargo should not be an increase in arms exports to China either in quantitative or qualitative terms.

Mr. Wilkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the effects on the level of threat to the security of the People's Republic of China of the lifting of the EU's embargo on the sale of armaments. [209944]

Mr. Rammell: The arms embargo review, announced by the December 2003 European Council, is ongoing. Until the review process is complete, the Government continues to implement the arms embargo as set out by the then Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the late Derek Fatchett, in his reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Gedling (Vernon Coaker) on 3 June 1998 *Official Report*, columns 240–41.

The Government do not believe that a decision to lift the embargo would affect the security of the People's Republic of China or any country or territory in the region since arms exports would remain covered by the EU code of conduct.

Mr. Wilkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has received from the US Government on lifting the EU's embargo on the sale of armaments to the People's Republic of China. [209946]

Mr. Rammell: As my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary told the Committee on Strategic Export Controls on 12 January 2005, the US has a legitimate and understandable interest both in the effectiveness of the EU's system of arms control and in the stability of the east Asian region. Representatives of the UK and US Governments, at all levels, have therefore discussed the issue. However, the review of the EU arms embargo and any decisions arising from it are to be undertaken by the EU only. The EU will take all relevant factors into account in the review.

Correspondence

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he expects to make a final response to the letter from the hon. Member for Bolton, South-East, of 7 October 2004, regarding the case of Mr. Mohammed Howaz's daughter-in-law, ref. GV100/83465. [209269]

Mr. Mullin: I replied on 19 January.

Cote d'Ivoire

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of the impact on the stabilisation process of Cote d'Ivoire of the proposed referendum on the presidential candidature of Alassane Ouattara; and if he will make a statement. [209088]

Mr. Mullin: We support the package of actions for all parties set out in the Linas Marcoussis (LMA) and Accra III Agreements, and believe that these offer the best hope for lasting peace in Cote d'Ivoire.

We recognise, as does the African Union, that a referendum is one of the options for changing the nationality requirements for presidential candidature (Article 35) but share their view that there needs to be a speedy solution to this issue in compliance with the spirit of the LMA and Accra III.

Eritrea

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will press the European Union to consider imposing sanctions against Eritrea in response to its treatment of evangelical Christians. [209566]

Mr. Mullin: The Government have no plans to press for sanctions against Eritrea on this issue. We believe this would be counterproductive.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the government of Eritrea on *(a)* releasing evangelical Christians arrested on new year's eve in Asmara, *(b)* official recognition of the evangelical Protestant Christian denominations in Eritrea and *(c)* detentions of evangelical Christians; and if he will make a statement. [209567]

Mr. Mullin: We raise the issue of religious freedom with the Eritrean Government regularly. Our Ambassador last raised the matter on 13 December and I raised it with President Isaias in Asmara during my visit there in January last year. We will continue to make clear our concern.

EU Presidency

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the Government's priorities for the General Affairs and External Relations Council will be during the United Kingdom's Presidency of the European Union; and if he will make a statement. [209556]

Mr. MacShane: The UK Presidency, like all Presidencies, will manage the continued priorities of the European Union. These will include:

> Reaching an agreement on the future financing of the EU (2007–13) if not already resolved.
>
> Taking forward as appropriate the accession processes of the four candidate countries: Bulgaria, Romania, Croatia and Turkey. This is likely to include finalising the negotiating mandate for Turkey to enable the launch of its negotiations on 3 October as well as consideration of the Commission Regular Reports on each of the candidate countries.

The UK Presidency will also respond to events and pursue the objective of global stability through continued development of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) including the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), along the lines set out in the European Security Strategy (ESS). An important aspect will be to work closely with the United States.

> Work will continue to develop the EU's relations with its neighbours through the European Neighbourhood Policy including developing relations with Ukraine following the recent elections. The EU will also continue to build up its strategic relationship with Russia.
>
> Work will continue to resolve the situation in the Middle East, through the implementation of the Road Map, and to address the situation in Iran, including the issue of Iran's nuclear programme. The General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) will continue to implement the EU strategy for Iraq in partnership with the Iraqi government with the objective of achieving a stable, democratic and prosperous future as envisaged in United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1546.
>
> Work will continue to review, update and implement the EU action plan on combating terrorism and the EU strategy against the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction.
>
> Work will continue to develop the EU's relations with Africa, taking into account work going on in the G8 context and the recommendations of the Commission for Africa. Particular attention will be paid to reducing poverty, economic development, prevention management and resolution of conflict and improving governance. In Latin America the GAERC will aim to make further progress to finalise the EU-Mercosur negotiations. The GAERC will continue to build up strategic partnerships with China, India and Japan.
>
> In the field of military crisis management, particular attention will be devoted to the running of the EU Force operation Althea in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In 2005, the two first six-monthly reviews of the operation will be carried out. The Union will remain active in the field of civilian crisis management and look to implement the action plan for the future of civilian ESDP. The EU will continue to run effectively the ongoing mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Macedonia, and Georgia.

European Union

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what sanctions would be available under the proposed EU constitution against member states in breach of their duty under Articles I-16 *(a)* actively and unreservedly to support the Union's common foreign and security policy and *(b)* to refrain from action contrary to the Union's interests or likely to impair its effectiveness. [208256]

Mr. MacShane: The Article I-16 obligations referred to in the question are in substance the same as those first set out in Article J.1 (4) of the Maastricht treaty (currently Article 11(2) TEU). As under the Maastricht treaty and the treaty on European Union, member states are under the constitutional treaty required to comply in good faith with their treaty obligations, including those relating to the common foreign and security policy mentioned in Article I-16. Any consequences which might follow if a member state failed to fulfil its obligations would depend on the circumstances. But the jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice is excluded from common foreign and security policy issues by Article III-376.

House of Lords/European Parliament

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether a derogation from EU Treaty provisions was granted to the United Kingdom which allows dual membership of the House of Lords and the European Parliament; and if he will make a statement. [209259]

Mr. MacShane: The Act concerning the election of the representatives of the European Parliament (annexed to Council Decision 76/787 of 20 September 1976 as amended by Council Decision 2002/772), provides that, from the European Parliament elections in 2004, the office of member of the European Parliament shall be incompatible with that of member of a national parliament. That Article also provides that, by way of derogation from that rule, members of the United Kingdom Parliament who were also members of the European Parliament during the five year term preceding election to the European Parliament in 2004 may have a dual mandate until the 2009 European Parliament elections.

The ban imposed by this Article, and the derogation it provides, apply in respect of membership of either House of the United Kingdom Parliament.

Mr Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the current position with regard to *(a)* Mr. Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh, imprisoned in Pakistan, and *(b)* his Department's involvement in this case. [209016]

Mr. Mullin: We continue to raise the case of Mr. Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh with the Pakistani authorities in London and Islamabad. We have offered consular assistance to Mr. Sheikh and shall continue to seek clarification on whether he wishes to take up this offer.

Portugal

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what plans he has for disposal of the assets comprising the British consulate in Oporto when the post is closed; [209884]

(2) what use will be made of funds raised from the disposal of the property and land occupied by the British consulate in Oporto when the post is closed; [209885]

(3) if he will publish the disposition attachment of the will of the late Evelyn Teage pertaining to the closure of the British consulate in Oporto; [209886]

(4) what legal advice he has taken on the status of the property and land occupied by the British consulate in Oporto after closure of the post; [209887]

(5) what sales have previously been made of land occupied by the British consulate in Oporto; and what happened to the proceeds under the terms of the Evelyn Teage Will Trust. [209888]

Mr. Rammell: Following the announcement of the closure of the Consulate in Oporto in December 2004, the Trustees are considering, with legal advice, the future of the property and the fund against the background of the intentions of Evelyn Teage's bequest.

In 1994, the Trustees sold part of the land attached to the consulate. The proceeds were used to renovate the house; to pay off debts to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office who had been paying maintenanće of the property; to construct new offices and to provide a long-term fund to maintain the remaining property.

SCOTLAND

Conferences

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many conferences were *(a)* attended by officials from his Department, *(b)* cancelled by and *(c)* facilitated by his Department in each year since 1997; and what the (i) cost to the Department and (ii) location was in each case. [205757]

Mrs. McGuire: The Scotland Office was established on 1 July 1999. Information in the form requested is not held centrally.

Departmental Properties

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many properties are held by the Department; what total floor space these properties provide; how many properties are vacant; and how much floor space vacant properties comprise. [206487]

Mrs. McGuire: The Scotland Office leases two buildings, which are shared with the Office of the Advocate-General for Scotland. In addition, some staff are accommodated in buildings owned or leased by the Scottish Executive. The total floor space of accommodation occupied by the Scotland Office and the Office of the Advocate-General is 2,760 sq m. There are no vacant properties.

E-mails

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on his Department's policy regarding the retention of e-mails in electronic form *(a)* after and *(b)* up to 1 January 2005; and what instructions have been given regarding the deletion of e-mails prior to 1 January 2005. [206952]

Mrs. McGuire: The Scotland Office continues to implement well established policies and procedures for the review and disposal of files in accordance with its administrative needs and the Public Records Act. E-mail messages that form part of the official record are saved for as long as business needs require and stored corporately in accordance with departmental record management procedures. Further e-mail guidance is available on the National Archives website at:

http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/electronicrecords/advice/pdf/managing_emails.pdf.

No instructions were given to staff about the deletion of e-mails prior to 1 January 2005.

G8 Summit (Gleneagles)

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what estimate he has made of the costs of security for the G8 summit at Gleneagles. [209397]

Mrs. McGuire: It is not customary to disclose the security costs for such events. Discussions on the overall arrangements, including resource matters, are continuing between relevant Government Departments.

IT (Disciplinary Procedures)

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many staff in his Department have *(a)* received official warnings and *(b)* faced disciplinary procedures following breaches of IT policy in each year since 1997. [205808]

Mrs. McGuire: The Scotland Office was established on 1 July 1999. Since, April 2000, when records began, three members of staff have received warnings following minor breaches of IT policy.

Ministerial Engagements

Mr. Gummer: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the ministerial engagements *(a)* out of London and *(b)* in London that he has cancelled since 1 January 2004. [209219]

Mrs. McGuire: My right hon. Friend and I carry out frequent engagements both in and outside London and it is occasionally necessary to cancel such engagements for parliamentary or other ministerial business. No record is kept of cancelled engagements.

Press Officers

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many press officers are employed in the Department. [206528]

Mrs. McGuire: The Scotland Office currently has two press officers, one of whom is part-time, and there is also one vacant post.

Skye Toll Bridge

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what the estimates were of the cost of building the Skye Toll Bridge when the private finance initiative agreement to build it was agreed in 1986. [209633]

Mrs. McGuire: Responsibility and documentation relating to the construction and financing of the Skye Bridge are devolved matters for the Scottish Executive. The Scotland Office has no continuing responsibility and does not hold information about the Skye Bridge.

Stolen Property

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many civil servants from his Department have *(a)* faced disciplinary proceedings as a result of allegations of theft, *(b)* been charged with theft and *(c)* been dismissed following theft allegations in each year since 1997. [206397]

Mrs. McGuire: The Scotland Office was established on 1 July 1999. Since then, no staff have faced disciplinary proceedings, charges or faced dismissal as a result of theft allegations.

Telephone Numbers

Mr. Tyler: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many non-geographic 0870 telephone numbers are in use by his Department; and what services can be accessed by calling each of them. [205832]

Mrs. McGuire: The Scotland Office has no 0870 telephone numbers in use.

Mr. Tyler: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how much revenue his Department has received from the use of non-geographic 0870 telephone numbers for the period 1 October 2003 to 30 September 2004. [205842]

Mrs. McGuire: As the Scotland Office has no 0870 telephone numbers in use, there is no revenue.

WORK AND PENSIONS

CSA

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many Child Support Agency cases are on the *(a)* new and *(b)* old systems. [207782]

Mr. Pond: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive, Mr. Doug Smith. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Doug Smith to Mr. John Mann dated 20 January 2005:

In reply to your recent parliamentary question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many Child Support Agency cases are on the *(a)* new and *(b)* old systems. There are around 1.36 million cases currently being dealt with by the Child Support Agency. Of these cases over 587,000 have been registered on the new system; approximately 360,000 of these cases are being dealt with under the new legislation and 227,000 under the old legislation. In addition around 770,000 are currently old scheme cases on the old computer system.

Health and Safety Offences

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many employees have been *(a)* prosecuted and *(b)* convicted for health and safety offences under section 7 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 in each year since 1974. [209014]

Jane Kennedy: The numbers of employees prosecuted and convicted for offences under section 7 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 in each of the last eight years, in cases following HSE investigations, are as follows:

	Number of employees	
	Prosecuted	*Convicted*
1996–97	10	10
1997–98	12	11
1998–99	13	12
1999–2000	17	13
2000–01	15	14
2001–02	22	17
2002–03	19	15
2003–04[1]	25	19

[1] Figures for 2003–04 are provisional.

Notes:

1. Attempting to obtain previous years' figures would incur disproportionate cost. Similar figures for local authority cases are not available from the (voluntary) local authority returns on health and safety enforcement.
2. Year refers to operational year which runs from 1 April to 31 March.

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many company directors have been *(a)* prosecuted and *(b)* convicted for health and safety offences under section 37 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 in each year since 1974. [209015]

Jane Kennedy: The number of company directors or other senior corporate officers prosecuted and convicted for offences under section 37 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 in each year since 1974 in each of the last eight years, in cases following HSE investigations, are as follows:

	Number of individuals	
	Prosecuted	*Convicted*
1996–97	17	15
1997–98	6	5
1998–99	9	9
1999–2000	17	12
2000–01	16	15
2001–02	16	11
2002–03	18	9
2003–04[1]	12	10

[1] Figures for 2003–04 are provisional.

Notes:

1. Attempting to obtain previous years' figures would incur disproportionate cost. Similar figures for local authority cases are not available from the (voluntary) local authority returns on health and safety enforcement.
2. Year refers to operational year which runs from 1 April to 31 March.

Housing

Ms Atherton: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will grant to board members of housing associations and trusts a state benefit waiver having the effect of disregarding remuneration they receive as a result of their service on a housing association board. [209138]

Mr. Pond: Income related benefits, such as income support, income based jobseekers allowance and pension credit, are intended to help people whose resources are insufficient to meet their day-to-day living expenses. Any remuneration paid to board members is treated in the same way as other types of earnings and attracts the normal £5, £10 or £20 earnings disregard. However, expenses are fully disregarded where the expenses were incurred wholly, exclusively and necessarily in the performance of the board members duties.

Housing benefit and council tax benefit are payable to people on low income, whether or not they are in remunerative work. However, as with the other income related benefits, remuneration for housing association board members is treated the same as all other earned income; everything in excess of standard disregards is taken into account.

For those in receipt of incapacity benefit, which is normally paid to people who are incapacitated by the effects of their illness or disability, the permitted work rules introduced in April 2002 will apply. Incapacity benefit recipients are now able to earn up to £20 a week for an unlimited period, or, from 1 October 2004, work for less than 16 hours and earn up to £78 a week for 26 weeks.

We have no plans to change the way in which this type of income is treated.

Ms Atherton: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many representatives serving on housing association and trust boards have had benefits cut as a result of such service in the last 12 months. [209139]

Mr. Pond: The information is not available in the format requested and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

New Deal

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in Stoke-on-Trent have found work through new deal programmes since they were introduced. [209899]

Jane Kennedy: The new deal has been very successful in helping more than 1.2 million people into work including 6,350 in Stoke-on-Trent.

Information on numbers helped into work by each new deal programme is listed in the following table.

Number of people who have found work through new deal programmes in Stoke-on-Trent

	New deal for young people	*New deal 25 plus*	*New deal for lone parents*	*New deal 50 plus*	*Total*
Stoke-on-Trent central	1,260	460	490	160	2,360
Stoke-on-Trent north	810	220	440	180	1,660
Stoke-on-Trent south	1,110	300	770	150	2,330
Total	3,180	980	1,700	490	6,350

Notes:

1. All data is to September 2004, except for new deal 50 plus which is to March 2003.

2. New deal for disabled people and new deal for partners is not available at parliamentary constituency level.

3. Totals may not sum as figures for each year are rounded to the nearest 10.

4. Programmes were introduced as follows: new deal for young people January 1998, new deal 25 plus July 1998, new deal for young people October 1998, new deal 50 plus April 2000.

Source:

New Deal Evaluation Database, DWP Information and Analysis Directorate

Nuclear Industry

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when he last discussed with the chief inspector for the Nuclear Industry Inspectorate the impact of the dispute with Prospect. [208303]

Jane Kennedy: I have not discussed directly with the acting chief inspector of the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate (NII) the impact of the HSE pay dispute on the work of NII, but I have received advice from him. In his opinion the dispute has not resulted in a less than adequate level of nuclear regulatory oversight to date.

I am keeping the matter under discussion at my regular meetings with senior officials from the Health and Safety Executive.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what recent proposals he has made to end the dispute with Prospect in the nuclear industry. [208304]

Jane Kennedy: The dispute between the Health and Safety Executive and Prospect came about as a result of the 2003 pay award. I am advised by the Executive that the 2004 pay negotiations with the trade unions are underway—with both sides keen to reach an agreed settlement and end the dispute with Prospect as soon as possible. There are still issues to resolve but both sides believe that this year's negotiations have been productive. The trade unions are considering a revised offer made by HSE on 10 January and the two sides intend to meet again by the end of January.

Post Office Card Account

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what restrictions data protection legislation places on the issuing of personal invitation documents for a Post Office card account for child benefit. [208871]

Dawn Primarolo: I have been asked to reply.

The Inland Revenue takes its obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998 very seriously. The Department's procedures for issuing invitations to apply for a Post Office card account comply with the provisions of the Act.

Pensioners

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many *(a)* men and *(b)* women were in receipt of the state retirement pension in the Easington constituency in each of the last five years. [208986]

Malcolm Wicks: The numbers of state pension recipients in the parliamentary constituency of Easington for March 2000 to March 2004 are shown in the following table:

March:	*Male recipient*	*Female recipient*
2000	6,000	9,600
2001	5,900	9,500
2002	5,900	9,400
2003	6,000	9,200
2004	6,000	9,300

Notes:

1. Figures are taken from a 5 per cent. sample and are therefore subject to a high degree of sampling variation.
2. Data is rounded to the nearest 100.
3. Parliamentary constituencies are assigned by matching postcodes against the relevant Office for National Statistics postcode directory.
4. Figures show all people getting a state pension i.e. a category A, B, C or D state pension or graduated retirement benefit.

Source:

IAD Information Centre, 5 per cent. sample as at 31 March for the years shown.

Stachybotrys Chartarum

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what action his Department has taken in conjunction with the Health and Safety Executive and other agencies to assess *(a)* the prevalence and *(b)* appropriate action to deal with the toxic mould fungus stachybotrys chartarum in (i) the workplace and (ii) the wider environment. [208517]

Jane Kennedy: The Department for Work and Pensions and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) are not engaged in any specific action to assess the prevalence of the mould Stachybotrys chartarum in the workplace. HSE does not assess the effect of microorganisms in the wider environment and is not aware of any assessment of the mould's prevalence by other agencies.

Employers have a statutory duty to identify workplace risks from all biological agents (including moulds) and to put control measures in place to manage those risks under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 and Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH). Guidance on assessing risks to workers is available in the COSHH Approved Code of Practice and other guidance documents.

Winter Fuel Allowance

Mr. Etherington: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many *(a)* pensioners and *(b)* pensioner households in Sunderland (i) are eligible for winter fuel allowance, (ii) have not yet received their entitlement and (iii) have reported non-receipt of their allowance; and if he will make a statement. [209537]

Malcolm Wicks: It is not possible to provide an estimate of the number of people or households in Sunderland who are eligible to receive a winter fuel payment. Nor is it possible to say how many have not yet received their entitlement. The great majority of those who are entitled to a payment receive this automatically. Others have until 30 March 2005 to make their claim. So far there have been 78 reports of non-receipt of the winter fuel payment from people in Sunderland. These are being investigated and payments posted as appropriate.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Affordable Housing

Ms Oona King: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what proportion of the low cost home ownership units being built or acquired in Tower Hamlets between 2004 and 2006 housing associations have been reported as being for people from black and minority ethnic communities. [209616]

Keith Hill: 668 Low Cost Home Ownership properties in Tower Hamlets were allocated grant in the 2004–06 Approved Development Programme. Of these 361 dwellings (54 per cent.) have been identified by Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) in their bids as being intended for people from black and minority ethnic communities. Allocations are subject to variation.

Boot Estate

Mr. Wareing: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has to visit the Boot Estate in Norris Green, Liverpool; and if he will make a statement. [209462]

Yvette Cooper: My right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister currently has no plans to visit the Boot Estate in Norris Green, Liverpool.

Mr. Wareing: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when the Minister of State for Housing and Planning will reply to the letter from the hon. Member for Liverpool, West Derby of 9 December 2004 in respect of the Boot Estate, Norris Green, Liverpool. [209463]

Keith Hill: I replied to my hon. Friend on 18 January 2005.

External Supplies

John Mann: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many tenders were let by his Department to external suppliers in financial year 2003–04; and what the value was. [209112]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was formed in May 2002 and since its inception has operated devolved procurement arrangements.

Although certain information relating to procurement activity is centrally managed, the number of tenders issued by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister during this period is not held centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Greater London Assembly

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the value for money of the Greater London Assembly. [209363]

Keith Hill: Londoners voted for a Mayor and Assembly for London in a referendum in 1998. The Greater London Authority, constituting the Mayor and Assembly, came in to existence in 2000 and is accountable to the voters of London.

The Mayor provides strategic leadership over London-wide issues while the Assembly's role is to scrutinise the Mayor's activities. The Audit Commission has recently carried out an Initial Performance Assessment of the Authority. The results will be published shortly.

Homelessness

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many homeless households on average were in *(a)* temporary accommodation and *(b)* bed and breakfast accommodation in England in each year since 1990–91. [207969]

Yvette Cooper: Local authorities report their activities under homelessness legislation quarterly, and this includes the number of homeless households in temporary accommodation as on the last day of the quarter. Tabled as follows are the numbers of such households distinguished by accommodation type, including bed and breakfast, as at 31 March for each year since 1991, together with a four quarter annual average for each year.

Households in temporary accommodation[1] arranged by local authorities under homelessness legislation as at 31 March, together with the annual average for each financial year

England

	Total number of households	*Bed and breakfast hotels[2]*		*Hostels/Women's refuges*	
		Number	*Percentage of total*	*Number*	*Percentage of total*
March 1991	50,000	12,240	24	10,230	20
Average for 1990–91	46,050	11,920	26	9,170	20
March 1992	62,090	12,220	20	10,310	17
Average for 1991–92	59,620	12,810	21	10,280	17
March 1993	61,380	7,570	12	10,890	18
Average for 1992–93	63,630	8,840	14	10,970	17
March 1994	52,340	4,920	9	10,460	20
Average for 1993–94	55,090	5,620	10	10,500	19
March 1995	46,350	4,480	10	10,380	22
Average for 1994–95	47,190	4,540	10	10,190	22
March 1996	43,240	4,750	11	10,090	23
Average for 1995–96	45,000	4,920	11	10,210	23
March 1997	41,250	4,100	10	9,680	23

Households in temporary accommodation[1] arranged by local authorities under homelessness legislation as at 31 March, together with the annual average for each financial year

England

	Total number of households	*Bed and breakfast hotels[2]*		*Hostels/Women's refuges*	
		Number	*Percentage of total*	*Number*	*Percentage of total*
Average for 1996–97	42,640	4,280	10	9,960	23
March 1998	47,520	4,820	10	9,730	20
Average for 1997–98	45,350	4,620	10	9,340	21
March 1999	56,580	6,570	12	9,840	17
Average for 1998–99	53,070	6,270	12	9,730	18
March 2000	65,170	8,680	13	10,300	16
Average for 1999–2000	61,810	8,160	13	10,030	16
March 2001	75,200	10,860	14	10,610	14
Average for 2000–01	71,920	9,770	14	10,550	15
March 2002	80,440	11,840	15	9,610	12
Average for 2001–02	78,190	11,840	15	10,050	13
March 2003	89,400	12,070	14	10,010	11
Average for 2002–03	85,160	12,560	15	9,790	11
March 2004	[3]97,290	7,170	7	10,850	11
Average for 2003–04	[3]94,490	9,280	10	10,540	11

	Private sector accommodation[4]		*Other types (including LA/RSL's own stock)*	
	Number	*Percentage of total*	*Number*	*Percentage of total*
March 1991	[5]—	[5]—	27,530	55
Average for 1990–91	[5]—	[5]—	24,960	54
March 1992	25,190	41	14,370	23
Average for 1991–92	22,900	38	13,640	23
March 1993	26,270	44	16,200	26
Average for 1992–93	27,810	44	16,010	25
March 1994	20,860	40	16,100	31
Average for 1993–94	23,270	42	15,710	29
March 1995	14,130	30	17,360	37
Average for 1994–95	16,380	35	16,080	34
March 1996	11,410	26	16,990	39
Average for 1995–96	12,000	27	17,880	40
March 1997	14,040	34	13,430	33
Average for 1996–97	11,920	28	16,490	39
March 1998	14,820	31	18,150	38
Average for 1997–98	14,370	32	17,030	38
March 1999	19,270	34	20,900	37
Average for 1998–99	17,610	33	19,470	37
March 2000	20,060	31	26,130	40
Average for 1999–2000	19,000	31	24,620	40
March 2001	25,610	34	28,120	37
Average for 2000–01	24,280	34	27,330	38
March 2002	28,370	35	30,620	38
Average for 2001–02	26,410	34	29,900	38

	Private sector accommodation[4]		*Other types (including LA/ RSL's own stock)*	
	Number	*Percentage of total*	*Number*	*Percentage of total*
March 2003	37,130	42	30,210	34
Average for 2002–03	33,250	39	29,580	35
March 2004	50,080	51	29,190	30
Average for 2003–04	45,440	48	29,230	31

[1] Households in accommodation either pending a decision on their homelessness application or awaiting re-allocation of a settled home following acceptance. Excludes those households designated as "homeless at home" that have remained in their existing accommodation and have the same rights to suitable alternative accommodation as those in accommodation arranged by authorities.

[2] From 2002 Q1 onwards, some self-contained accommodation in annex-style units previously recorded under B and B now more appropriately attributed to private sector accommodation.

[3] Provisional.

[4] Private sector properties leased, or under licence, to social landlords, or rented directly from a private landlord.

[5] Included in "other".

Note:

Totals may not equal the sum of components because of rounding.

Source:

ODPM P1E homelessness returns

The latest quarterly Statistical Release on statutory homelessness, published by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister on 13 December, presents more detailed analyses from 1997 up to the end of the third quarter of 2004. Key summary, including numbers of households in various forms of temporary accommodation, at local authority level is contained in an associated supplementary table. These have been made available in the Library of the House, and via the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website.

Housing

Dr. Stoate: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list major housing developments of 50 units or more in the Thames Gateway region which have received planning permission in each of the last five years indicating *(a)* the total number of planned units on each site, *(b)* the number of (i) social and (ii) affordable units agreed upon in the section 106 agreement between the developer and local authority for each site and *(c)* the total number of (A) social and (B) affordable units on each site where all phases of development have been completed. [209837]

Keith Hill: The information requested is not held centrally by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Local Government Finance

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the average percentage change in band D council tax rates in England has been since 1997. [209365]

Mr. Raynsford: The average Band D council tax bill increased by 69.6 per cent. between 1997–98 and 2004–05.

Planning Applications (Flood Risk)

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what advice he has issued to planning authorities in respect of allowing properties to be built on land at risk from flooding; what plans he has to revise such guidance; and if he will make a statement. [209471]

Keith Hill: Policy guidance for England is contained in Planning Policy Guidance Note 25, Development and Flood Risk, published in July 2001. Responses to consultation in late summer 2004 on whether to revise PPG25 are being considered and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will announce conclusions shortly.

Premises serving Alcohol

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what changes to national planning *(a)* guidance and *(b)* regulations relating to premises serving alcohol have been made since 1997. [209707]

Keith Hill: The amendments to the Use Classes Order, announced in November 2003, are the only changes to national planning *(a)* guidance and *(b)* regulations relating to alcohol-serving premises.

These regulations will come into force this year and amended guidance, in the form of a Circular, will be published at the same time.

Roadside Advertising

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) if he will make a statement on the *(a)* hazards of and *(b)* trends in incidence of commercial advertising alongside motorways and major roads; [208862]

(2) what representations he has received regarding the *(a)* effects of and *(b)* level of commercial advertising alongside motorways and major roads; [208863]

(3) if he will take action to curb the amount of commercial advertising alongside motorways and major roads. [208864]

Keith Hill: Local planning authorities have powers to control advertisements alongside motorways and major roads. They have to consider amenity and public safety when allowing an advertisement to be displayed.

During the past six months, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has received 20 representations from Members of Parliament and 21 from members of the public about the road safety aspects and the increase in commercial advertisements alongside motorways and major roads.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister intends to remind local planning authorities of their powers to remove advertisements displayed in contravention of the Regulations when new Regulations are made later this year.

Social Housing

Dr. Stoate: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what *(a)* social and *(b)* affordable housing targets have been set for major housing development sites of each local authority in the Thames Gateway region. [209836]

Keith Hill: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not set annual targets centrally for local authorities on either affordable or social housing.

For the Thames Gateway, as elsewhere, planning policies for affordable housing (which includes social housing) are currently set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 3 : "Housing" and in Circular 6/98, "Planning for Affordable Housing". They advise that where local planning authorities are able to demonstrate a lack of affordable housing to meet local needs, based on up-to-date surveys and other data of local need, they should indicate in their local plan how many affordable homes need to be provided throughout the plan area, and set indicative targets for specific suitable sites (expressed either as numbers of homes or a percentage of the homes on the site).

In London the Mayor is responsible for preparing the spatial development strategy (SDS), also known as the London Plan. In the remaining eight English regions, regional planning bodies (RPBs) are responsible for developing regional spatial strategies (RSSs). RSSs and the SDS should be developed in line with national planning policy. The principal role of the RSS/SDS is to serve as a strategic planning framework for the region, with which local development frameworks produced by local planning authorities must be in conformity. This may include indicative targets for the delivery of affordable housing.

The Thames Gateway is covered by the Mayor of London, and the two RPBs, the east of England regional assembly and south east England regional assembly. In August 2004, these three bodies published an interregional planning statement, to act as a co-ordinated planning strategy for the Thames Gateway sub-region. While it is a non- statutory document, it provides the regional partners with an agreed strategy and should inform the development of regional plans.

The London Plan, published in February 2004, set an affordability target of 50 per cent. for new developments. Regional spatial strategies for the south east of England and the east of England regions are currently under review. At present neither existing RSS sets a target for affordable housing. An anticipated target of 30 per cent. was put forward in the interregional planning statement. The draft RSS revision for the east of England contains a policy providing an affordability target of 30 per cent.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether the contracts signed by his special advisers differ from the Model Contract for Special Advisers. [207238]

Yvette Cooper: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister on 17 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 753W.

West Midlands Fire Service

Mr. John Taylor: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the cost of pension provision to the West Midlands Fire Service was in each of the last 10 years; and what percentage of the total budget of the authority this represented in each year. [209873]

Phil Hope: The information requested is not held centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. However, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does hold figures for pensions expenditure and total net current expenditure of the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority for the financial years 2001–02, 2002–03 and 2003–04. The figures, also expressed as a percentage, are tabled as follows:

	Pension's expenditure (actual £000)	*Net current expenditure (£000)*	*Pension's expenditure as a percentage of total net current expenditure*
2001–02	20,279	87,781	23.1
2002–03	21,601	90,682	23.8
2003–04	21,670	97,847	22.1

The data provided are as reported by the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority and are taken from outturn figures for 2001–02 and 2002–03 and budget estimates for 2003–04.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Darfur

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of conditions at Ardamata Camp outside Geneina, Darfur. [209068]

Hilary Benn *[holding answer 19 January 2005]*: The situation in Ardamata Camp, as in much of West Darfur is stabilising. The latest United Nations Humanitarian Needs Profile (HNP) shows the following percentage of residents of Ardamata Camp for the month of December, compared with those published in November's profile, which had access to:

HNP

	Percentage
December 2004	
Food	100
Shelter	86
Clean water	81
Sanitation	71
PHCF	100
Nutrition	97
November 2004	
Food	100
Shelter	86
Clean water	81
Sanitation	71
PHCF	100
Nutrition	64

With regard to security, the UN Humanitarian Needs Profile indicates that there have been only isolated incidents being reported.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what discussions he has had with non-governmental organisations to ensure that efforts to provide aid to Darfur are not reduced consequent on work done to provide aid to victims of the tsunami in Asia. [209730]

Hilary Benn: Since September 2003, the UK has allocated £62.5 million to providing humanitarian relief to Darfur. This contribution, and our total pledge to

Sudan for the next financial year of £100 million, underlines the UK's continuing strong commitment to Sudan. Sudan remains a very high priority for us, and our support will not be affected by our response to the tsunami affected countries.

A significant proportion of the £100 million for next year—£20 million—has been allocated to NGOs, which remain committed to both rebuilding of Sudan and supporting the humanitarian operations in Darfur. DFID holds regular meetings with NGOs working in Darfur on both a bilateral level and collectively. We have had no indication that they are looking to decrease their operations.

HIV/AIDS

Mr. Byers: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what his estimate is of the number of *(a)* adults and *(b)* children who died in each of the last 10 years in developing countries from (i) HIV/AIDS, (ii) malaria and (iii) tuberculosis. [209464]

Hilary Benn *[holding answer 18 January 2005]*: Along with the rest of the international community, DFID relies on HIV and AIDS data from the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS). Separate figures for deaths in adults and children under 15 years for developing countries are not available.

UNAIDS estimates in 2003, out of a global total of 2.9 million AIDS deaths, 2.4 million were adults and 490,000 were children. In 2004, out of a global total of 3.1 million AIDS deaths, 2.6 million were adults and 510,000 were children. A country breakdown is available on the UNAIDS web site, (www.unaids.org).

Malaria kills over one million people worldwide each year, 98 per cent. (982, 095) are children under 14. Tuberculosis kills approximately 2 million people each year, 5 per cent. (103734) are children under 14. TB is the leading cause of death among people who are HIV positive[1].

[1] Source: The Lancet Volume 364 October—November 2004

Tsunami

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what contingency plans are in place to overcome logistical difficulties in getting aid to tsunami victims in the countries affected. [209729]

Hilary Benn: Supporting the logistical effort has been a priority for DFID since the earthquake and tsunami hit. DFID has provided equipment to help establish the UN Field Office in Bandeh Aceh and the Humanitarian Information Centre. DFID has provided an expert to work in the centre. DFID is also providing three air operators to help co-ordinate the movement of relief items by air, along with 25 landrovers and five helicopters put at the disposal of the United Nations.

UK forces also played an important role in this. DFID is providing significant airlift capacity, including one RAF c-17 plane. Two navy ships—Chatham and Diligence—provided assistance off Sri Lanka. Their Lynx helicopters undertook assessments and provided transport capacity.

In addition to the material support mentioned, DFID has provided significant financial support to logistics. This represents part of DFID's £2 million commitment in support of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, as well as the £1.5 million committed to the International Committee of the Red Cross, £3.5 million to the World Food Programme, £1 million to the International Organisation for Migration, £0.5 million to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and £0.4 million to the UN's Security Co-ordinator.

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps he is taking to ensure that orphaned survivors of the tsunami are protected from the activities of paedophile rings; and whether it is his policy to ensure that partner aid agencies take action to minimise such risks. [209829]

Hilary Benn: DFID is monitoring the situation closely and will work with partner agencies and affected governments to ensure that everything possible is being done to prevent such horrible abuses. Our partners conform to principled standards of humanitarian action in undertaking their work. At present there has only been a small number of child abduction cases reported. DFID is following this up through discussions with the United Nations Children Fund. DFID has committed £2.25 million to support this agency's work to protect children in Sri Lanka and Indonesia.

Water and Sanitation Projects

Mr. Alan Duncan: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much EU overseas development assistance has been *(a)* committed and *(b)* spent on water and sanitation projects in each year since 2000, broken down by country. [209830]

Hilary Benn: Data from the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) show European Commission (EC) average commitment on water supply and sanitation in 2001–02 was US$150 million. Total overseas development assistance to water supply and sanitation from the EC in 2001 was allocated as follows: Africa 79 per cent., Latin America and Caribbean 15 per cent., Oceania 6 per cent. (this is based on a five-year moving average).

The European Union (including 25 member state plus the European Commission) is the largest donor overall and the largest donor in the water sector in Africa, committing some €1.4 billion each year. The priority of water has been increased in African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries, with the establishment of the EU-ACP Water Facility (€250 million available this year).

Obtaining comparable figures is difficult because different donors use different criteria to calculate support to the water sector or track support within multi sector projects. Figures may also include or exclude related issues such as water resources management or concessional loans. The UK is working with the EU Water Initiative Finance Working Group to improve the tracking of aid flows in the water sector.

Mr. Alan Duncan: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what plans his Department has to increase the proportion of EU aid spent on water and sanitation projects. [209831]

Hilary Benn: EU funds for aid are allocated by the Commission on the basis of priorities set out by developing countries in Country Strategy Papers. The Department for International Development (DFID) is represented on all committees at which these papers are discussed and agreed and works with others to ensure aid is spent as effectively as possible to help achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), including those on access to water and sanitation.

Within African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries, DFID is represented on the board of the European Development Fund (EOF) and has been involved in establishing the ACP-EU Water Facility. The Water Facility makes provision for €250 million this year, from the unspent funds of the EDF, for catalytic projects in the sector that are able to leverage greater finance flows and accelerate progress toward the MDGs.

DFID are also supporting the EU Water Initiative. The EU Water Initiative, through an Africa Component are working with the African Ministerial Council on Water and other stakeholders in Africa on increasing the priority being given to water and sanitation in poverty reduction or national development strategies, on improving strategic planning in the sector and on improving donor coordination. This will ensure that existing money is better spent and that a clearer demand for work in the sector is articulated to which donors (including the EU) may respond with increased aid commitments under the 2002 Monterrey Consensus principles of demand led assistance.

DEFENCE

British Nuclear Tests Veterans Association

Mr. Todd: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what response has been provided to solicitors representing the British Nuclear Tests Veterans Association. [209533]

Mr. Pickthall: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what response he has made to the lawyers acting on behalf of British Nuclear Tests Veterans who have submitted a letter before action. [209664]

Mr. Caplin: A letter of acknowledgement has been sent in response to the Letter of Claim from the solicitors representing members of the British Nuclear Tests Veterans Association.

Brunei

Mr. Keith Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has to reduce the size of the Gurkha garrison in Brunei as part of the defence review. [208483]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 17 January 2005]*: None.

Colombian Army

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what recent UK military aid has been given to *(a)* the 3rd Division of the Colombian Army and *(b)* the brigades and battalions that comprise the 3rd division of the Colombian Army; and which programmes this aid is funding. [200035]

Mr. Ingram: We do not provide generic military assistance to Colombian Army divisions, brigades or battalions as formations, including the 3rd Division. UK military assistance provided to the Colombian Army is focused on specialist Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) units and British military education to selected individuals, such as The Royal College of Defence Studies, which introduces British Defence concepts, including human rights and democratically accountable Armed Forces.

Departmental Costs

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what estimate he has made of the cost of *(a)* new builds, *(b)* demolition rebuilds and *(c)* PFI projects in his Department for each of the last two years. [200797]

Mr. Caplin: The information is not held in the form requested and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Infantry

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence which future English Infantry Battalions under the future army structure are expected to be under establishment. [208301]

Mr. Ingram: The Future Army Structure will require a shift in personnel from the current mix of light and heavy forces to a more balanced structure of light, medium and heavy forces. Manpower released from the reductions in infantry battalions will be used to strengthen the remaining infantry units, and expand specialist areas such as engineers, logisticians, signallers and intelligence. The precise re-distribution of this manpower is currently being considered.

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment his Department has made of the comparative costs of recruitment and training for infantry recruits in each infantry regiment. [209196]

Mr. Caplin: Whilst costing data cannot be differentiated by capbadge, the comparative cost of recruitment and training for the three career employment groups in the infantry, guards, line and para, for the financial year 2003–04 at the Infantry Training Centre Catterick are listed in the following table:

Career employment group	*Length of course (weeks)*	*Cost per trainee for financial year 2003–04 (£)*
Line	24	22,000
Guards	26	26,000
Para	28	37,000

These costs are calculated on an accruals basis and include non cash items such as depreciation and cost of capital.

Iraq

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many serving British military personnel or past serving personnel in Iraq have been charged with offences against Iraqi civilians since the recent military conflict began; if he will list each of the offences with which military personnel have been charged; how many personnel *(a)* have so far been found guilty and *(b)* are awaiting trial for such offences; and if he will make a statement. [208725]

Mr. Ingram: Since the start of operations in Iraq in March 2003 six soldiers have been charged with offences against Iraqi civilians. These cases are ongoing and for legal reasons no further information can be given at this time.

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what facilities exist for relatives or friends to visit Iraqis held in detention or in prison by British military forces in Iraq; and what procedures have to be followed for such visits to take place. [208742]

Mr. Ingram: Within 24 hours of an internee arriving at the Divisional Temporary Detention Facility (DTDF) in Basrah, the only detention centre administered by the United Kingdom, the International Committee of the Red Cross are informed. It is then their role to inform the internee's family.

Comprehensive procedures are in place for family members to visit internees at the DTDF; in summary, internees can be visited once they have been at the DTDF for 14 days, and four adults and four children can visit an internee at any one time for up to 45 minutes. There is no limit placed on how many times an internee is visited, although the DTDF reserves the right to cancel visits for reasons of security. There is a Visitors' Reception Area and a meeting room.

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the total cost of military action in Iraq was in *(a)* 2003–04 and *(b)* 2004–05 to date. [209530]

Mr. Ingram: The costs of operations are calculated on a net additional basis. Audited figures for operations in Iraq are published each year in the Ministry of Defence's Annual Report and Accounts. Costs for 2002–03 and 2003–04 were:

	£ million
Operations in Iraq	1,051
Expenditure on capital equipment	260
Total	1,311

Estimated costs for 2004–05 will be included in Spring Supplementary Estimates to be published shortly. Final figures will be published in the MOD's Annual Report and Accounts for 2004–05 following necessary stocktake activity and audit by the National Audit Office.

Meteorological Office

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the role is of the Meteorological Office in connection with issuing *(a)* flood warnings and *(b)* severe weather warnings; what resources are available to it; and what the level of accuracy of these forecasts was in 2004. [208874]

Mr. Caplin: The Met Office does not itself issue flood warnings, but provides information and services to the Environment Agency in support of their responsibility to issue flood warnings in England and Wales. It provides similar support to the Scottish Environment Protection Agency. A more restricted severe weather service has been commissioned by and is therefore provided to the Northern Ireland Executive.

As the National Met Service for the United Kingdom, the Met Office has a responsibility for warning the citizens of the UK of severe weather events. Severe weather warnings are issued when it is judged there is a possible danger to life and property, or when disruption to transport is possible. Two types of warnings are issued. Flash warnings are typically issued three to six hours ahead of a predicted event and early warnings are issued up to five days ahead of a forecast event. These warnings are made available to the public via a range of media (including national television and radio) and to other Government bodies and agencies who have a responsibility for the protection of life, property and infrastructure. During 2004 a total of 406 severe weather warnings were issued. The Met Office records for 2004 indicate that some 87 per cent. of severe weather events occurring in the UK were preceded by a severe weather warning.

The funding for the National Severe Weather Service is provided by the Cabinet Office and devolved administrations. In the current financial year, the funding available to the Met Office for this service is £2.02 million.

Military Operating Costs

Mr. Keith Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the annual operating costs in near cash terms of *(a)* HMS Grafton, *(b)* HMS Marlborough and *(c)* HMS Norfolk were in financial years 2002–03 and 2003–04. [209339]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence does not manage costs on the basis of individual ships or types of ships. There is therefore no distinct, identifiable budget for Type 23 frigates. However we estimate the near cash costs in 2003–04 for these frigates to be:

	£ Million
Grafton	8.1
Norfolk	8.4
Marlborough	9.0

It is not possible to provide figures for 2002–03 broken down by individual ship, because costing information was not recorded in a manner that would allow their allocation to individual platforms with a reasonable degree of accuracy. However, in a written answer on 9 September 2003, *Official Report*, column

346W to the hon. Member for Portsmouth, South (Mr. Hancock) I estimated that the average running cost for a Type 23 frigate was £10.3 million.

MOD Efficiency Programme

Mr. Keith Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the planned cashable savings attributable to his Department's efficiency programme are for the *(a)* Army Base Repair Organisation, *(b)* Defence Aviation Repair Agency, *(c)* Defence Science and Technology Laboratories, *(d)* Meteorological Office and *(e)* UK Hydrographic Office for financial years (i) 2006–07 and (ii) 2007–08. [209331]

Mr. Caplin *[holding answer 18 January 2005]:* The Ministry of Defence Efficiency Programme does not include cashable savings from these agencies.

Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what his priorities are for the nuclear non-proliferation treaty review conference in May 2005; and whether the UK will request that replacement of Trident be placed on the agenda. [209883]

Mr. Hoon: The United Kingdom's goals for the review conference are to make the case for stronger and more effective counter-proliferation measures and to emphasise the importance of compliance with the treaty. We will do this in the context of emphasising the UK's good record on nuclear disarmament, and we will produce a final report of the studies that we have conducted on the verification of nuclear disarmament. The nuclear non-proliferation treaty defines the purpose of the review conference as being "to review the operation of this treaty with a view to assuring that the purposes of the preamble and the provisions of the treaty are being realised." The agenda for the 2005 nuclear non-proliferation treaty review conference is yet to be agreed by state parties to the NPT.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. [illegible]vans: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence to how many written questions tabled in the last parliamentary session his Department had been unable to provide a substantive answer before the end of the session. [199655]

Mr. Caplin: Our records show that we were unable to provide a substantive answer to 152 of the 4,456 written questions tabled to the Ministry of Defence.

Runway De-icing Chemicals

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what problems have been experienced with the delivery of runway de-icing chemicals for *(a)* RAF and *(b)* other service airfields. [199858]

Mr. Ingram: In February 2004 the supplier of runway de-icing chemicals to the Ministry of Defence was unable to meet the required delivery date for a demand from a RAF airfield. The demand was satisfied by an alternative supplier. No other problems with the delivery of runway de-icing chemicals to RAF or other service airfields have been reported.

Territorial Army

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the minimum timescale for operations is that Territorial Army establishments will be able to accommodate personnel who may not be able to deploy in support of large scale operations taking up to six months. [208294]

Mr. Caplin: Arrangements to ensure that Territorial Army (TA) establishments are organised to accommodate those personnel who may not be able to deploy in support of large scale operations will not be tied to a time scale. It is an organisational framework to ensure that TA units have sufficient manpower to meet the tasks for which they are designed. It recognises that, at any time, there are some volunteers who are unable to deploy owing to personal circumstances and others who are still under training and not yet ready for operations. TA units will therefore be established so that they are able to recruit and train additional manpower at their peacetime location. The final arrangements will be the subject of further announcements in due course

Tsunami (Military Assistance)

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the statement by the Prime Minister of 10 January 2005, *Official Report*, columns 22–31, on the Asian tsunami, on what date the five Hercules aeroplanes were deployed in the disaster area. [208817]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 17 January 2005]:* One C130 deployed on 1 January to centralise aid within Europe and one C130 deployed to Sri Lanka on 2 January. To date the other three aircraft have not been called forward by DfID; instead C17 and TriStar aircraft have been tasked as these aircraft provided a more cost effective and efficient means of moving the freight.

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions he has had with the Wiltshire Mercy Appeal based at the former RAF Wroughton about using the Hercules aircraft at RAF Lyneham to deliver the aid which they have collected. [208870]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 17 January 2005]:* None. DFID is leading the response by Her Majesty's Government to the tsunami in the Indian Ocean. DFID has agreed to transport aid procured by the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) agencies in response to specific requirements on the ground. The RAF aircraft made available to the relief effort are tasked in line with DFID direction.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether his Department will seek to recover costs from *(a)* the Department for International Development and *(b)* funds committed by the UK Government to the relief effort for the use of the UK military staff and equipment in the support and relief effort following the Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami; and if he will make a statement. [209077]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence is providing assistance to DfID in the international relief effort in the Indian Ocean. Under the usual arrangements, MOD will be recovering from DfID only the marginal cost of this involvement.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence on what occasions since 1997 his Department has recovered costs for the use of UK military staff and equipment used in *(a)* emergency relief efforts and *(b)* support of international aid projects; how much money was recovered from (i) the Department for International Development and (ii) other overseas aid budgets in each year; and if he will make a statement. [209078]

Mr. Ingram: This information is not held centrally and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

World War Two Commemoration (Wales)

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans have been made for the commemoration in Wales of the 60th anniversary of the end of World War Two. [208795]

Mr. Caplin: On behalf of the Government, the Ministry of Defence is sponsoring a series of events to mark the 60th anniversary of the end of the Second World War on 10 July with the focus in London. In addition there will be commemorations at the Cenotaph on 8 May and 21 August to mark VE Day and VJ Day respectively. It is hoped that other towns and cities in the United Kingdom will also arrange their own commemorations. The Ministry of Defence is not organising any commemorative events of this sort in Wales, but I understand that the National Assembly for Wales is planning an event in Cardiff on 10 July. Local events are being planned by veterans' organisations, including the Soldiers', Sailors' and Airmen's Families Association—Forces Help and The Royal British Legion, in Monmouth and Llandudno respectively.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Botox

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent research he has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated on the use of animals to test (i) Botox and (ii) Dysport for cosmetic purposes; and if he will make a statement. [209076]

Caroline Flint: The Home Office has not commissioned or evaluated research for the purposes stated.

Botox and Dysport are trade names for products containing botulinum toxin. The safety and efficacy of this substance have to be tested on animals, in connection with its range of clinical uses as a prescription only medicine.

This regulatory animal testing in the UK is licensed under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986. A review of the relevant project licence authorities has confirmed that the testing is solely for pharmaceutical and therapeutic purposes. The Home Office does not license animal testing of botulinum toxin for cosmetic use.

Chinese Nationals

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what his policy is on where responsibility should lie for Chinese nationals in the UK who have not been granted asylum in the UK and who are not accepted back by the Chinese authorities. [208296]

Mr. Browne: Chinese nationals whose applications for asylum have been unsuccessful are expected to leave the UK, and their removal may be enforced.

The Chinese authorities will accept the return of Chinese nationals whose nationality and identity has been verified. In cases where travel documents have been lost or destroyed, an Emergency Travel Document must be obtained from the Chinese Embassy. We are working closely with the Chinese Government to improve the effectiveness of the redocumentation process.

As part of its remit, the National Asylum Support Service (MASS) provides support to those eligible individuals who have not been granted asylum in the UK and who are co-operating with arrangements for their return.

Correspondence

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will reply to the letter dated 18 November 2004 from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to Mr. Shaban Kurtula. [208711]

Mr. Charles Clarke: I wrote to my right hon. Friend on 14 January.

Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority

Richard Ottaway: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to his answer of 6 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 389W, on the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority, what assessment he has made of whether staff numbers are adequate to deal with the workflow; and whether there are delays in processing the cases before the authority. [206080]

Paul Goggins: As part of the wider efficiency savings across Government, announced earlier this year, the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority (CICA) released many of its temporary agency staff. The authority is also currently carrying a number of vacancies for permanent staff, but is looking to fill these as soon as possible.

CICA expects to receive about 70,000 new applications in 2004–05, and to resolve approaching the same number, though many of the cases so resolved would have been lodged in previous years.

The mean average time from receipt of an application to the issue of the (first) decision by CICA has risen by two days this year over the mean average time of 305 days taken in 2003–04. Claims which go to formal review and appeal inevitably take longer to finalise, the time taken depending on the complexity of the case and the nature of any issues in dispute.

CICA makes every effort to give a high quality service to claimants. For example, the authority is currently planning an upgrade to its IT systems to improve business efficiency.

Criminal Justice Act

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether detailed costings have been made of the changes to sentencing which will occur as a consequence of the Criminal Justice Act 2003; when the changes will be introduced; and whether they will be fully funded by central Government. [205684]

Paul Goggins: The majority of costs associated with the sentencing provisions of the Criminal Justice Act 2003 with financial implications (i.e. community orders, custody plus, suspended sentences, increased magistrates sentencing powers, intermittent custody, dangerous offenders, release on licence, recall after release and drug treatment and rehabilitation requirements) will fall on the Prison Service, Probation Service, Youth Justice Board, Department for Constitutional Affairs and the Judicial Studies Board.

The provisions will be implemented as part of a strategy which will aim to ensure that custody is reserved for dangerous sexual and violent offenders and seriously persistent repeat offenders, and that the benefits of community supervision are made available for more offenders.

Estimates of the costs of the sentencing provisions were set out in the explanatory notes which accompanied the Bill. Detailed work on costings continues but will be affected by how sentences are used in practice and the actual date of commencement of the provisions.

The following sentencing provisions contained in the Act have already been brought into force:

Criminal Justice Act 2003

	Date
Effect of the life sentence	18 December 2003
Offenders transferred to mental hospital	20 January 2004
Minimum sentence for firearms offences	22 January 2004
Pilots of intermittent custody	26 January 2004
Increase in penalty for fraudulently obtaining a driving licence	29 January 2004
Increase in penalties for drug offences	29 January 2004
Sentencing Guidelines Council	27 February 2004
Disqualification from working with children	1 May 2004
Release of foreign national prisoners	14 June 2004
Increase in penalties for driving offences	27 February 2004
Pilot of drug treatment and testing in action plan and supervision orders	1 December 2004

We expect the provisions relating to community orders, suspended sentences, dangerous offenders, release on licence and recall after release to be commenced next Spring. No final decision has yet been taken on the timing of commencement of the remaining sentencing provisions.

The cost of commencing the Criminal Justice Act 2003 will be met within the CJS Departments' spending review settlements.

Deportation

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average period of detention in the prison estate is for foreign nationals who, having completed their sentence, are awaiting deportation. [209452]

Mr. Browne: Information on the number of people who were detained in prison establishments awaiting deportation after completing their sentence is not available.

Work is on-going to improve the quality of the data held on those people detained under Immigration Act powers in prison establishments.

Detention without Trial

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will publish his response to the European Committee on the Prevention of Torture report and recommendations following inspection of conditions experienced by prisoners detained without trial at Belmarsh and Woodhill. [208398]

Mr. Lammy: I have been asked to reply:

The Government's response to the report by the Committee is in preparation. We will submit it in confidence to the Committee as soon as possible, and will consider the question of publication at that time.

Drugs

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many drug tests were carried out in custody suites in 2004; and how many of these showed positive for *(a)* buprenorphine, *(b)* heroin, *(c)* methadone, *(d)* amphetamines, *(e)* cocaine and *(f)* crack cocaine. [209117]

Caroline Flint: The table gives a breakdown of all drug tests carried out in custody suites in 2004 under the provisions of the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000.

	2004 drug test statistics
Tests attempted	65,796
Successful tests (a result obtained)	64,931
Number positive for Heroin only	9,459
Number positive for Cocaine (including Crack Cocaine) only	8,748
Number positive for both Heroin and Cocaine (including Crack Cocaine)	12,445
Total positive tests	30,652
Percentage positive tests	47

Drug testing is carried out to identify use of Heroin and Cocaine, including Crack Cocaine, as research suggests that these are the drugs most likely to be linked to committing acquisitive crime. No tests are carried out to identify the use of buprenorphine, methadone or amphetamines.

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many convictions have been secured in drug-related crime cases in *(a)* South Tyneside, *(b)* Tyne and Wear and *(c)* England and Wales in each year since 1997. [209288]

Caroline Flint: The available information is contained in the following table and gives the number of defendants found guilty at all courts for drug offences, 1997 to 2003.

Number of defendants found guilty at all courts for drug offences[1], 1997 to 2003

	1997	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
England and Wales	40,666	48,822	48,711	44,622	45,622	49,036	51,165
Tyne and Wear[2]	714	1,223	1,424	1,439	1,790	1,867	2,015
Of which:							
South Tyneside PSA[3]	68	132	178	129	204	264	251

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis.
[2] Includes those found guilty at the Crown Court where the committing court was in the Tyne and Wear area.
[3] Includes those found guilty at the Crown Court where the committing court was South Tyneside PSA.

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many drug dealers were convicted of dealing outside schools in each of the last 10 years. [209107]

Caroline Flint: It is not possible from the information held on the Home Office Court Proceedings database to identify whether a person proceeded against for drug dealing was outside a school, as the circumstances of the offence are not collected centrally.

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* bodies and *(b)* individuals have made representations to his Department on drug use in schools in each of the last 10 years. [209109]

Caroline Flint: The Home Office engages actively with a wide range of stakeholders in the Drug Strategy. Details of individual representations are not held centrally and to provide details would incur disproportionate cost.

Identity Cards

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether a risk register has been prepared in respect of the identity cards scheme. [208285]

Mr. Browne: Yes.

Immigration

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the immigration status of Albanian nationals *(a)* Taulant Merdany and *(b)* Elidon Bregu; when and under what immigration status each arrived in the United Kingdom; what interviews have taken place with them or their legal representatives during the time they have been in this country; what immigration records are held by his Department on each; and whether his Department will be informed by the prison authorities when they are released from prison. [209253]

Mr. Browne: It is not departmental policy to release information regarding an individual's immigration status.

Procedures are in place to ensure the Prison Service informs the Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND) about foreign nationals who are serving custodial sentences in UK prisons. Prison Service Order 4630, issued on 18 September 2004, requires individual prisons to notify the IND Criminal Casework Team of non-EU nationals held on remand and all convicted prisoners who are serving a sentence.

Initiatives (Funding)

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what budget was allocated to the *(a)* Police Information Technology Organisation, *(b)* witness care units, *(c)* Youth Justice Board, *(d)* youth inclusion and support panels and *(e)* the youth offending teams in each of the last two years; and how many staff each organisation employed in each year. [201726]

Fiona Mactaggart: The information is as follows:

(a) The Police Information Technology Organisation's budget (including resource and capital) for the financial year 2003–04 was £220.2 million, rising to £284.4 million in 2004–5. PITO employed 643 staff and 695 staff respectively.

(b) In the financial year 2003–04, Witness Care Units were set up in five pilot sites only. In 2004–05, funding was awarded to set up Witness Care Units in each of the 42 Criminal Justice System areas. The figures for the budget and staff employed (full-time equivalent) are listed in the following table:

	Budget (£ million)	*Staff*
2003–04	0.338	145.7
2004–05	5.592	934.1

(c) The Youth Justice Board's (YJB) budget in the financial year 2003–04 was £373 million reducing to £369 million in 2004–05.

The YJB employed 180 staff in each year.

(d) We are advised that responsibility for allocating budgets to the 77 youth inclusion and support panels falls within the remit of the Department for Education and Skills.

(e) The total budget for all of the Youth Offending Teams (YOT) was 217 million in the financial year 2003–04, rising to £220 million in 2004–05. These figures include a contribution of £48 million per annum from the Youth Justice Board. The YOTs employ 10,000 staff.

Knife Crime

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what his Department's strategy is to tackle knife crime. [205305]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 20 December 2004]*: The Government are determined to tackle knife related violence. As we announced on 15 December, the Home Office is considering a package of measures working with the Department for Education and Skills and the Association of Chief Police Officers. We are focusing on analysis of information, tackling the knife culture, especially among young people, community involvement and strengthening legislation. The measures under consideration include: raising the minimum age for purchasing a knife to 18; adding new categories of knife now being used in crime to the list of banned offensive weapons; providing a power to require specified licensed premises to search for an offensive weapon on entry; giving head teachers a new power to search pupils for knives; pulling together best practice from initiatives and schemes focusing on knife crime and developing local crime reduction and enforcement strategies on dealing with the carrying of knives.

Ministerial Visits

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which counties were visited by his officials and Ministers in relation to substance misuse in 2004. [208932]

Caroline Flint: Ministers and officials regularly visit counties in pursuance of delivery of the Government's Drug Strategy. To provide details of the visits undertaken in 2004 would incur disproportionate costs.

National Identity Register

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the likely size of the national identity register at the end of financial year *(a)* 2012–13 and *(b)* 2013–14. [209619]

Mr. Browne: The current best estimate of the number of enrolments recorded in the National Identity Register by the end of the financial year: *(a)* 2012–13 is 31,282,000, and *(b)* 2013–14 is 39,999,000.

Prison Service Alcohol Strategy

Ross Cranston: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the funding needs for the implementation of the Prison Service Alcohol Strategy; and what the timetable will be for its implementation. [207193]

Paul Goggins: The strategy will be implemented within existing funding settlements. It will be for individual prison establishments to implement the measures as their priorities allow. No central timetable has been set.

Royal Mail

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many fixed penalty notices have been issued under section 72 of the Highways Act 1835 to Royal Mail employees for cycling illegally on footpaths in each year since 1997. [203163]

Caroline Flint: Data on the number of fixed penalties issued to pedal cyclists riding on a footpath contrary to section 72 of the Highways Act 1835 are not collected centrally.

Stafford Prison Escape

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will commission an independent investigation into the escape of three prisoners from Stafford Prison on 8 December; and if he will publish the results. [207270]

Paul Goggins: No. An independent investigation is not considered necessary or appropriate for most escapes. The normal practice is for an escape to be investigated by a senior manager of the Prison Service from a prison or unit other than that from where the escape occurred. In this case an investigation has been commissioned by the Area Manager of West Midlands and is being led by the Head of Security Group in Prison Service headquarters. The reports of internal investigations are not published.

UN Convention on Migrant Workers

Mr. Wills: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the compatibility of the Government's immigration policies with the UN Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and their Families. [207706]

Mr. Browne: The UN Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families is not compatible with the Government's immigration policies. For example, most overseas nationals coming to the UK to take employment require a work permit. The UK employer applies for a work permit to enable them to fill a specific vacancy in the UK, following which the worker applies for leave to enter or remain in the UK. If the migrant worker leaves this employment they are expected to leave the UK or to apply for a work permit for their new employment. The Convention, however, would allow them to remain in the UK for the duration of their leave, whether or not they were still employed. We consider that unemployed migrants being able to remain in the UK and claim benefits in these circumstances would act as an unnecessary "pull factor" and undermine current immigration controls.

Wormwood Scrubs

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what measures he has taken to ensure *(a)* that all entrance routes to the segregation unit at HMP Wormwood Scrubs are covered by close circuit television cameras and *(b)* that all visits to the unit by prison officers are recorded. [206584]

Paul Goggins: All entrances to the Wormwood Scrubs segregation unit and activity in the unit are covered by 16 continuously recording cameras.

All staff are required to sign in and out of the unit.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Airline Passengers

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make it her policy to seek to increase levels of consumer protection for airline passengers on scheduled flights who are not part of a package holiday. [201826]

Charlotte Atkins: I have been asked to reply.

The Government are currently examining the potential regulatory impact of a broad range of consumer protection options, including extending the current arrangements to cover airline passengers who are not part of a package holiday.

Avient

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry with regard to the recent Statement by the UK National Contact Point for the OECD Guidelines, on Avient, whether the National Contact Point sought confirmation of Avient's account of its activities during the war in the Democratic Republic of Congo *(a)* with MONUC and *(b)* with the UN's Department of Peace Keeping Operations; and if she will make a statement. [200491]

Mr. Alexander: The Statement made by the National Contact Point (NCP) for the OECD Guidelines on Avient drew, in part, on documentation provided by the UN. In accordance with the confidentiality provisions of the Guidelines process that apply to the dialogue stage, the Government cannot discuss the content of the issues raised in that process.

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) with regard to the recent Statement by the UK National Contact Point for the OECD Guidelines, on Avient, what role *(a)* the Secretary of State and *(b)* the Department's solicitor played in the decision to exclude the non-governmental organisations RAID and Action contre l'impunite pour les Droits Humans (ACIDH) from acting as complainants; which officials were involved in the decision to proceed with the Avient case without a complainant; and if she will make a statement; [200492]

(2) whether the non-governmental organisations RAID and Action contre l'impunite pour les Droits Humans (ACIDH) were accepted by her Department as complainants in respect of allegations against Avient. [200755]

Mr. Alexander: RAID and ACEDH have not submitted a complaint supported by evidence. They are not excluded from acting as complainants.

They are welcome to enter their own complaint which will be dealt with under the procedures for the Guidelines.

Ministers approved the recommendation for a twin track approach to the Avient case due to a requirement to maintain the confidentiality of the UN documentation.

Constitutional Treaty

John Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the cost of providing freepost by the Royal Mail for public information on the Constitutional Treaty for the European Union prior to and during the referendum. [208761]

Mr. MacShane: I have been asked to reply.

Enquiries are being made about the cost of distributing information on the EU Constitutional Treaty through Royal Mail. No decisions have yet been made on this issue.

Council Directives

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on the implications for UK business of amendments to Council Directive 73/23/EEC set out in 2004/C 299/07, OJ C299 volume 47 of 4 December. [207119]

Mr. Alexander: There are no implications for UK business. The list as set out in 2004/C 299/07 is a full re-issuing of the list of notified bodies, and takes account of notified bodies of new member states that had joined in May 2004.

Employees' Health Care

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the proportion of *(a)* small and medium sized businesses and *(b)* UK employers who want to take some responsibility for their employees' health care. [202271]

Jane Kennedy: I have been asked to reply.

No direct survey has been undertaken to establish the proportion of small and medium sized businesses and UK employers who want to take some responsibility for their employees' health care.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) commissioned research by the Institute of Occupational Medicine (IOM) "Survey of Use of Occupational Health Support" published in June 2002 which showed that 3 per cent. of all companies throughout the UK provided occupational health support for their staff. Concern for health, safety and wellbeing of employees was the main reason quoted for having occupational health support regardless of size, sector or region.

Miners' Compensation

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry which solicitors the Law Society has informed the Department have been ruled against for negligence under the miners compensation scheme. [207784]

Nigel Griffiths: The Department has not been advised of any findings of negligence as against "inadequate professional conduct" by the Law Society against solicitors handling claims under the miners compensation scheme.

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what advice her Department is issuing following the recent Law Society ruling on Raleys

Solicitors and negligence and the use by solicitors of her Department's coal compensation circular of spring 2004 as a defence of their actions. [207875]

Nigel Griffiths: The Department's advice was set out in its spring 2004 newsletter and reflects the ruling by the Law Society.

Nuclear Safety

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on the *(a)* matters discussed and *(b)* decisions taken at the meeting of the EU Ad hoc Working Party on Nuclear Safety held in Brussels on 13 January; if she will place in the Library copies of documents discussed; and at what internet site details of the work of this ad hoc group may be found. [209158]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: Last June, the Council concluded that any Community instrument in the fields of nuclear installation safety or the safe management of radioactive waste and spent fuel should be developed only following a process of consultation involving stakeholders and should take account of future developments in the international arena running through at least into 2006. Last December, the Working Party on Atomic Questions adopted an Action Plan for implementing these Council Conclusions. It envisages a programme of activities for the member states, acting individually or collectively, linked to the standards-making work of the IAEA, the peer review processes of the relevant international Conventions and the efforts to harmonise regulatory approaches currently being undertaken by Europe's national nuclear safety authorities. At their meeting on 13 January, experts considered ways in which this work should be carried forward with a view to identifying what, if any, further action at EU level might be helpful in order to improve nuclear safety. At this stage, it is not clear what source documents will be considered although the Health and Safety Executive's expert intends to draw the Working Party's attention to the United Kingdom's third national report for the Convention on Nuclear Safety. This is available on the DTI's website. We expect that the Presidency will ensure that the Working Party's report is published on the EU's Europa website. Early indications suggest that the Presidency hopes to have an interim report ready in the spring.

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether additional protection was required for *(a)* the low-level radioactive waste disposal trenches at Drigg and *(b)* the high-level radioactive waste storage tanks at Sellafield as a result of the recent stormy weather in Cumbria. [209159]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: I understand from BNFL, operator of the Sellafield and Drigg sites, that additional protection was not required for these facilities as a result of the recent adverse weather conditions in West Cumbria. Neither sustained any damage in the recent storms.

Research and Development (Expenditure)

Mrs. Anne Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the expenditure of each agency sponsored by her Department on research and development has been in each financial year since 2001–02; and what percentage this represents of that agency's total expenditure in each year. [201360]

Nigel Griffiths: The information is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Research Councils (Consultants)

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to her answer of 21 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1614W, on Research Councils (Consultants), how much has been paid to consultants by each Research Council *(a)* to help them prepare for oral evidence sessions before Parliamentary Select Committees and *(b)* for other services in relation to parliamentary activities since June 2004. [209207]

Ms Hewitt: I understand that my hon. Friend is seeking information on the period since June 2001.

Research Councils paid the following amounts to consultants during this period.

(a) To help them prepare for oral evidence sessions

	£
BBSRC	10,719
CCLRC	14,700
EPSRC	21,194
ESRC	13,007
MRC	7,020
NERC	10,880
PPARC	6,786

(b) For other services in relation to parliamentary activities

	£
BBSRC	0
CCLRC	0
EPSRC	54,274
ESRC	0
MRC	112,980
NERC	0
PPARC	317,331

Special Advisers

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many special advisers there are in the Department, broken down by Civil Service pay-grade. [206516]

Ms Hewitt: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply given my hon. Friend the Minister at the Cabinet Office on 21 December 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1640–41W.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether the contracts signed by her special advisers differ from the Model Contract for Special Advisers. [207282]

Ms Hewitt: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply given by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister on 17 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 753W.

Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive

Ms Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what progress has been made on arrangements to implement the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive by August. [209538]

Mr. Alexander: The Government have completed a consultation on draft implementing regulations and draft guidance for the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive. The Government are considering carefully the views expressed by respondents and in the light of these I and my ministerial colleagues will decide on the final regulations and guidance.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Child Care (Schools)

Mr. Trimble: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the proposed level of funding for child care in schools is for the next three years. [209183]

Mr. Gardiner: The Department of Education does not fund child care in schools in Northern Ireland.

DOE Planning Service

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how DOE Planning Service takes *(a)* the sustainability of the rural environment and *(b)* the possible destruction of mature trees and hedgerows into account when considering applications for planning permission. [208980]

Angela Smith: The information is as follows.

(a) The Planning Service's approach to sustainable development is set out in its Planning Policy Statement 1: General Principles. When considering planning applications it is guided by the precautionary principle that, where there are significant risks of damage to the environment, its protection will generally be paramount, unless there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest.

(b) Careful consideration is given to the potential impact of any proposed development upon existing trees, woodland and important hedgerows. Wherever possible, these will be protected by the imposition of conditions on planning approvals. Opportunities are also taken to secure new tree planting in development schemes. Where development involves the loss of trees, permission will normally be conditional on a replanting scheme with trees of appropriate numbers, species and size.

Long Service Award

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make available to the Department for Social Development in Northern Ireland the 25 year long service award offered in the Department for Work and Pensions. [204125]

Mr. Pearson: A 25 year long service award is not currently part of the terms and conditions of employees of the Department for Social Development but its introduction will be considered as part of the 2005 pay round.

IT Projects

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list his Department's IT projects in each year since 1997, broken down by *(a)* amount spent, *(b)* purpose, *(c)* cost of over-run and *(d)* time of over-run. [205786]

Mr. Pearson: The following table gives information on IT projects costing in excess of £1 million within the Northern Ireland Office Core, its agencies, the Bloody Sunday Inquiry and the Northern Ireland legal offices (Director of Public Prosecutions and Crown Solicitors Office).

	Project	*Purpose*	*Amount spent (£ million, excluding. VAT)*	*Cost of over run (£000, excluding VAT)*	*Time of Over run*
1997	—	—	—	—	—
1998	—	—	—	—	—
1999	OASIS Y2K Refresh	To upgrade NIO departmental infrastructure and make it Y2K compliant.	2.2	None	None
1999	COMPASS (to 2002)	To provide an e-human resources system for the Northern Ireland Prison Service.	5	0.06	3 months
1998	Bloody Sunday Inquiry—Londonderry (to 2000)	Implementation of IT systems to support the work of the inquiry.	2.6	None	None
2000	TARIFF (to 2004)	To provide office automation and an electronic claim processing system for criminal injuries compensation in Northern Ireland	2	0.2	1 year
2001	PRISM (to spring 2006)	To provide a prisoner record system for the Northern Ireland Prison Service	7	Project ongoing	Project ongoing
2002	CAUSEWAY (PPP project to 20 13)	A joint enterprise by criminal justice organisations in Northern Ireland to share information electronically	45	Project ongoing	Project ongoing
2002	Bloody Sunday Inquiry—London	Implementation of IT systems to support the work of the inquiry.	2.5	None	None
2003	DPP INFRASTRUCTURE	To implement a modern ICT infrastructure for the DPP NI.	1.2	None	None
2003	FLAX (to 2004)	Replace NIO IT infrastructure, provide internet and intranet and meet electronic document and records management targets.	8. 5	None	None

School Absence

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what percentage of pupils at each key stage in Northern Ireland were referred to the Education Welfare Service for persistent or chronic non-attendance in each academic year from 2000–01 to 2003–04. [208568]

Mr. Gardiner: The percentage of pupils referred to the Education Welfare Service at each key stage in Northern Ireland from 2000–01 to 2002–03 is as follows:

	Percentage pupils referred		
Key stage	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*
Primary			
Key stage 1	0.89	1.27	1.53
Key stage 2	1.72	1.88	2.14
Post-Primary			
Key stage 3	4.85	5.02	5.12
Key stage 4	8.12	8.46	8.92

The information sought for 2003–04 is not yet available.

I will write to the hon. Gentleman and provide the statistics for 2003–04 as soon as possible.

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many pupils at each key stage were referred to the Education Welfare Service in Northern Ireland in 2003–04 for persistent or chronic non-attendance. [208612]

Mr. Gardiner: The information sought is not available as the system used by the Education and Library Boards to record referrals to the Education Welfare Service was changed during 2003–04. Boards have been asked to provide the final returns for 2003–04 to the Department by 31 January and it is intended to publish this information on the website by the end of February 2005.

I will write to the hon. Gentleman and provide the details for 2003–04 when they become available.

Midwife-led Maternity Units

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many midwife-led maternity units are operating in Northern Ireland; and at which locations. [209125]

Angela Smith: There is currently one midwifery-led unit located on the same site as the consultant obstetric unit in Northern Ireland, at Craigavon Area Hospital. We have plans to develop similar units at a number of other locations including Altnagelvin Hospital, the Ulster Hospital and the new Belfast Maternity Hospital.

My announcement on 29 July 2004, allowed Boards and Trusts to consider the development of stand-alone Community Midwifery Units in locations where there is the support of local professionals and where safe and effective emergency transfer arrangements are in place. I understand that discussions are ongoing between Down Lisburn Trust and the Eastern Health and Social Services Board about the possibility of such a unit in Downpatrick.

Social Security Agency

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average clearance times were in days achieved by the Social Security Agency *(a)* in each of the last four financial years and *(b)* in the current financial year to date for dealing with applications for (i) jobseeker's allowance, (ii) income support, (iii) disability living allowance and (iv) incapacity benefit. [208587]

Mr. Spellar: The average clearance times in days achieved by the Social Security Agency in each of the last four financial years and in the current financial year to date for the benefit applications in question are set out in the following table.

	2000–01		*2001–02*		*2002–03*	
Benefit type	*Target*	*Result*	*Target*	*Result*	*Target*	*Result*
Jobseeker's allowance	93% in 21 days	94.7% in 21 days	AACT 12 days	AACT 8.7 days	AACT 12 days	AACT 9.5 days
Income support	87% in 13 days	89.6% in 13 days	AACT 12 days	AACT 5 days	AACT 12 days	AACT 7.2 days
Disability living allowance	95% in 73 days	79% in 73 days	95% in 73 days	AACT 83.9% in 73 days	AACT 60 days	AACT 73.6 days
Incapacity benefit	85% in 30 days	80% in 30 days	AACT 30 days	AACT 28 days	AACT 30 days	AACT 29.1 days

Benefit type	*2003–04*		*2004–05*	
	Target	*Result*	*Target*	*Year to date*
Jobseeker's allowance	AACT 12 days	AACT 10 days	AACT 12 days	AACT 11 days
Income support	12 days	AACT 8.6 days	AACT 12 days	AACT 9.8 days
Disability living allowance	AACT 60 days	AACT 95.1 days	AACT 60 days	AACT 57.9 days
Incapacity benefit	AACT 30 days	AACT 28.5 days	AACT 30 days	AACT 39.6 days

Notes:

The targets set for 2000–01 were expressed in terms of claims clearance time. These measured the percentage of processed claims which were cleared in X days.

From April 2001 to date SSA performance is expressed in terms of actual average clearance times (AACT), i.e. the cumulative number of days taken to clear the claim divided by the total number of claims processed.

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the accuracy of the figures for *(a)* debtors and *(b)* creditors recorded by the Social Security Agency. [208590]

Mr. Spellar: The Agency reports on debtors and creditors for both administration and programme expenditure.

Administration expenditure

The Agency has systems in place, both automated and manual, to collate and report on debtors and creditors.

The debtors and creditors are reported in the Agency Annual Accounts which are audited by the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO). The NIAO have certified the accuracy of debtors and creditors.

Programme expenditure

The benefit overpayment debtor balance in the 2003–04 Social Security Agency account was qualified by NIAO because of significant uncertainty over the accuracy and completeness of debt records.

The Agency is actively engaged in resolving these problems, and has established a debt management transformation programme. This will result in the procurement of a modern IT system for the management of debt and improved debt processes to both account for debt much more accurately in future and achieve better recovery rates.

Likewise, NIAO considered that there was considerable uncertainty over the encashment control creditor balance.

The Agency believes that much more reliance can be placed on the creditor balance. This is because benefit payments "issued" are recorded by the programme accounting computer system and the actual encashments of these payments are either reconciled by the Agency or agreed with the Post Office.

The difference between payments issued less those encashed is represented by the creditor balance and so the Agency concludes that, although a customer breakdown of the total is unavailable, the balance itself is actually robust.

Strangford Lough

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when *(a)* his Department, *(b)* the Police Service of Northern Ireland and *(c)* each other relevant agency was alerted to the ploughing of the intertidal mudflats at Strangford Lough over the Christmas and new year period; and at what time, and by whom, action was taken to (i) halt the ploughing, (ii) to caution the perpetrator and (iii) to investigate the extent of damage to the ecosystem. [209209]

Angela Smith: The Department of the Environment became aware of the ploughing of the mudflats on Monday 3 January 2005 when an officer of the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (WWT) telephoned the Environment and Heritage Service Water Pollution Hotline. The Police Service of Northern Ireland was alerted to the situation when it was called to deal with an incident on Strangford Lough shore on 27 December. Several other interest groups including WWT, National Trust and Northern Ireland Environment Link became aware of the damage at intervals during the holiday period and contacted the media to highlight the issue.

On 3 January an officer of the Department spoke to, and formally cautioned, one individual regarding the damage, further explaining that the action had to cease as it was in contravention of the Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002. The persons believed to have been responsible had previously been approached and advised to stop what they were doing, on 28 December 2004 and 3 January 2005, by officers of WWT. Investigations are continuing in an effort to determine the extent of damage and to identify all of those involved. A comprehensive scientific report is being prepared by an expert in the field and will be used to inform the next stages in the process.

Suicides

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many suicides there were in Northern Ireland in 2004. [208811]

Mr. Pearson: Data for the 2004 calendar year are not yet available. Provisional data for the nine-month period 1 January 2004 to 30 September 2004 show 98 deaths registered in Northern Ireland due to "suicide and self-inflicted injury" and 13 deaths due to "undetermined injury whether accidentally or purposefully inflicted". In the corresponding period in 2003 there were, respectively, 108 and five deaths due to these two causes.

Sure Start

David Burnside: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the effects on community groups in north Belfast of the decision to withdraw Sure Start funding from Home Start programmes in the area. [208882]

Angela Smith: At present, the Sure Start project operating within the Ardoyne and Oldpark areas is being reviewed in terms of the need for continued Home Start services but no decision has yet been reached. What is, however, important to stress is that an undertaking has been given to retain Sure Start resources within the geographical area of Ardoyne and Oldpark so that families and children under the age of four will continue to benefit from a comprehensive range of Sure Start services in their local area.

Translink

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many new trains Translink has taken delivery of in each of the past six months in Northern Ireland. [210342]

Mr. Spellar: The number of new trains Translink has taken delivery of in each of the past six months in Northern Ireland is as follows:

	Number of new trains
July 2004	0
August 2004	0
September 2004	0
October 2004	2
November 2004	2
December 2004	3
Total	7

In addition, Translink took delivery of one new train in April 2004 and two in May 2004.

Waste Water Treatment

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the implications for planning applications in *(a)* North Down and *(b)* in the rest of Northern Ireland of the recent European Commission threat of infringement proceedings for inadequate waste water treatment infrastructure. [208320]

Angela Smith: It is too early to assess the implications for planning applications in North Down and the rest of Northern Ireland at this stage. However, Government officials are seeking further senior legal counsel advice on the matter.

West Tyrone Area Plan

Mr. Trimble: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when the West Tyrone Area Plan will be published. [209181]

Angela Smith: I refer the right hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for North Down on 18 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 1775W.

TREASURY

Burnley Constituency

Mr. Pike: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people in the Burnley constituency were unemployed in *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* 2004; what percentage change that represents; and if he will make a statement. [209508]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Peter Pike, dated 20 January 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about unemployment in the Burnley Parliamentary Constituency.

The estimates available relate to the twelve-month periods ending in February 1997 and February 2004, the latest period for which figures are available. In these periods the numbers of unemployed people, who were resident in the Burnley Parliamentary Constituency, were 2,200 and 1,900 respectively.

These estimates from Labour Force Survey (LFS) are, as with any sample survey, subject to sampling variability and the estimates of changes over time for local areas are particularly affected.

A more reliable indication of change between 1997 and 2004 at Parliamentary Constituency level is the number of people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA). The annual average number of people resident in the Burnley constituency claiming JSA benefits in 1997 was 1,531. The corresponding average for the first 11 months of 2004 was 1,006. Between the two years there was a fall of 34 per cent.

Cancer Survival Rates (Women)

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer what the most recent figures are for the survival rates for women suffering from cancer. [209280]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Jim Cunningham, dated 20 January 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent question concerning the most recent survival rates for women suffering from cancer. (209280)

The latest available one- and five-year survival rates for the 20 most common cancers in England and Wales are for adult patients (aged 15–99 years) diagnosed during 1996–99 and followed up to 31 December 2001. These figures were published on the National Statistics website on 9 March 2004, and are available at:

http://www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/ssdataset.asp?vlnk = 7899

Child Trust Funds

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many children in Stoke on Trent are eligible for the Child Trust Fund; and what percentage of children in Stoke on Trent this represents. [209907]

Mr. Timms: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to my hon. Friend the Member for Battersea (Martin Linton) on 30 November 2004, *Official Report*, columns 87–88W. All children born and living in the UK since 1 September 2002 whose families receive child benefit will be eligible for the Child Trust Fund.

Richard Burden: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether further primary legislation would be required to enable moneys allocated under the Child Trust Fund to be reclaimed. [209931]

Mr. Timms: Once a payment has been made into a Child Trust Fund account the money belongs to the child in whose name the account is held. However, section 11 of the Child Trust Fund Act 2004 makes provision for recouping contributions that should not have been made. The Child Trust Fund Regulations 2004 allow the Inland Revenue to reclaim a payment made in error or as a result of fraud.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much the Department spent on lawyers in each year since 1997, broken down by *(a)* number of actions, *(b)* number of settlements, *(c)* number of court cases and *(d)* the costs of each settlement. [206449]

Mr. Timms: HM Treasury paid the following sums to the Treasury Solicitor (in the case of 2003–04 to the Treasury Solicitor and, in relation to one case, a private sector firm) for work billed by litigation teams for the years in question:

	Cases worked on in year	*Total (fees and disbursements) (£)*
1997–98	147	116,527.96
1998–99	133	87,489.15
1999–2000	157	82,305.13
2000–01	118	36,142.09
2001–02	127	89,137.45
2002–03	156	636,091.44
2003–04	137	720,018.58

The figure for "Cases worked on" in any given year will normally correspond to the number of actions/cases, but will also include pre-action matters and certain other work such as that on inquiries. Cases worked on in more than one year will be counted for each year concerned.

Earnings (Scotland)

Mr. Moore: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the *(a)* average and *(b)* median (i) weekly and (ii) hourly gross earnings (A) including and (B) excluding overtime is of (1) managers, (2) senior professional, (3) associate professional and technical, (4) administrative and secretarial, (5) skilled trades, (6) personal service, (7) sales and customer service, (8) process, plant and machine operatives and (9) elementary occupational groups are in each local authority area in Scotland, broken down by (x) male, *(y)* female and *(z)* all workers. [209268]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Mr. Michael Moore, dated 20 January 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question on earnings in Scotland. I am replying in his absence. (209268)

Average earnings are estimated from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) and are provided for employees on adult rates of pay whose pay was unaffected by absence during the pay period, by their place of work. This is the standard definition used for Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings tables. The Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings does not collect data on the self-employed and people who do unpaid work. The survey, carried out in April of each year, is the most comprehensive source of earnings information in the United Kingdom. It has a one per cent. sample of all employees.

Data for local authority areas in Scotland broken down by occupation groups are not currently available; however data for Scotland broken down by occupation groups are available on the National Statistics web site as follows:

Weekly gross earnings including overtime:

http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_labour/ASHE_2004_inc/tab3_1a.xls

Weekly gross earnings excluding overtime:

http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_labour/ASHE_2004_inc/tab3_2a.xls

Hourly gross earnings including overtime:

http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_labour/ASHE_2004_inc/tab3_5a.xls

Hourly gross earnings excluding overtime:

http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_labour/ASHE_2004_inc/tab3_6a.xls

A number of estimates have been removed from the published tables to maintain the confidentiality of individual employees.

External Supplies

John Mann: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many tenders were let by his Department to external suppliers in the financial year 2003–04; and what the value was. [209092]

Mr. Timms: The core Treasury procurement service let 16 tenders in 2003–04, covering periods of up to five years, with a total value of £29.2 million. Of this total, £13.3 million was for a two year contract let by the Treasury, but handed over to the Home Office to administer and pay for.

Foundation Hospitals

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether loans to foundation hospitals by banks are counted as public sector borrowing. [209628]

Mr. Boateng: Yes. The independent Office for National Statistics classifies NHS foundation trusts as public sector bodies. This means that their transactions and liabilities count as transactions and liabilities of the public sector.

National Insurance Fund

Adam Price: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much money was allocated from the National Insurance Fund to *(a)* the state pension and *(b)* sickness benefit in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [208503]

Mr. Pond: I have been asked to reply.

The information is in the following table.

£ million

	Retirement pension	*Incapacity benefit*
1999–2000	37,775	6,790
2000–01	38,718	6,766
2001–02	41,893	6,749
2002–03	44,338	6,758
2003–04	46,457	6,718

Notes:

1. Retirement pension includes contributory retirement pension basic and earnings related expenditure.

2. Incapacity benefit includes short term lower and higher, long term and earnings related expenditure.

3. Figures are for Great Britain and rounded to the nearest million.

NHS Expenditure

Norman Lamb: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will update the estimates of *(a)* the total NHS spending in the UK in 2005–06, 2006–07 and 2007–08 in figure 6.1 of the Budget 2002 and *(b)* gross UK NHS Spending as a proportion of GDP in 2005–06, 2006–07 and 2007–08 in figure 6.2 of the Budget 2002. [209614]

Mr. Boateng: The information is as follows:

Table 6.1: NHS spending in the UK

£ billion

	2005–06	*2006–07*	*2007–08*	*Average real growth*
Total UK public sector health spending[1]	88.6	97.4	107.2	7.1
Of which:				
England	76.4	83.8	92.1	6.9

[1] The public sector health spending figures are based on the UN Classification of the Functions of Government (COFOG), the international standard as used in the Public Expenditure Statistical Analysis 2004.

Table 6.2: UK health spending as a proportion of GDP

Percentage of GDP

	2005–06	*2006–07*	*2007–08*
Total UK health spending	8.6	8.9	9.2
Of which:			
Total UK public sector spending	7.1	7.5	7.8
Total UK private sector spending[1]	1.4	1.4	1.4

[1] Private health spending is based on the definition used for ONS Health Accounts and is assumed to stay at a constant share of GDP

Single Currency

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many of the five economic tests for joining the euro he assesses are being met. [209491]

Mr. Timms: The Government published an assessment of the five economic tests in June 2003. As the Chancellor announced in his 2004 Budget speech,

> "while the Government do not propose a euro assessment be initiated at the time of this Budget, the Treasury will again review progress at Budget time next year and report to the House."

Tax Credits

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the average time taken to decide an appeal against the Inland Revenue's decision to recover an overpayment in tax credits is; and if he will make a statement. [209724]

Mr. Timms: The information requested is not available.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the level of accuracy of processing and calculating new tax credits is for *(a)* 2003–04 and *(b)* the current tax year. [209725]

Mr. Timms: For the level of accuracy of processing and calculating tax credits for 2003–04 I refer my hon. Friend to page 29 of the Inland Revenue's Annual Report and Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2004. This is available on the Inland Revenue website at www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk The Inland Revenue will similarly report against its targets for 2004–05 in due course.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether a recipient of tax credits is able to return overpayments to the Inland Revenue as they occur. [209726]

Mr. Timms: If a tax credit claimant has been overpaid they can pay back their overpayment by sending a cheque made payable to "Inland Revenue":

Tax Credit Office
Valuables Team
Preston PR1 OSB.

In Northern Ireland, cheques can be sent to:

Tax Credit Office (NI)
Dorchester House
Great Victoria Street
Belfast BT2 7WF.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when the appeal made on 17 November 2004 against the Inland Revenue's decision to recover overpayments from the right hon. Member for Birkenhead's constituent, Mrs. Wynne, will be heard. [209727]

Mr. Timms: The Inland Revenue wrote to Mrs. Wynne about her 2003–04 overpayment on 10 January 2005.

Mr. Tyler: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many requests to reconsider recovery of overpayments of tax credit have been received; how many have been dealt with; and how many of those dealt with were successful on the grounds of an official error. [209787]

Mr. Timms: I refer the hon. Member to my hon. Friend's reply to the hon. Member for Aberdeen, South (Miss Begg) on 10 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 129W.

Tax Returns

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many taxpayers who completed a tax return returned it by the 31 January deadline in each year from 1997; and how many missed the deadline. [209526]

Dawn Primarolo: The total numbers of self assessment tax returns received at 31 January and still outstanding at 31 January are detailed as follows:

Million

	Number of returns:	
Return year	*Received at 31 January*	*Outstanding after 31 January deadline*
1996–97	7.874	0.666
1997–98	8.198	0.820
1998–99	8.211	0.877
1999–2000	8.131	0.949
2000–01	8.253	0.860
2001–02	8.371	0.875
2002–03	8.581	0.893

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much has been levied in fines for tax returns received after the 31 January deadline in each year since 1997; and how many of these fines remain unpaid. [209527]

Dawn Primarolo: The amount raised in respect of penalties for failure to submit self assessment tax returns, by the due date, in each year since 1997 is shown in the following table. The years relate to Inland Revenue accounting years that run to the end of October each year:

Year to end of October	*Penalties raised (£ million)*
1997	Not applicable
1998	116.41
1999	133.29
2000	148.39
2001	147.96
2002	143.24
2003	151.13

The amount of unpaid penalties at the end of October 2003 was £134.95 million. This figure includes penalties raised in earlier years but still unpaid at October 2003.

Inland Revenue do not have readily available the number of penalties still unpaid.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Tuition Fees

11. **Matthew Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many students from Cornwall are paying tuition fees. [209683]

Dr. Howells: In academic year 2004/05, provisional data show that 2,318 students domiciled in Cornwall are paying the full fee contribution. A further 1,253 are making a partial contribution, while 3,851 are making no contribution to their fees at all.

Armed Forces Families

12. **Mr. Cameron:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what progress the working group on the funding of schools with a large percentage of pupils drawn from families serving in Her Majesty's armed forces has made; and when Ministers expect to announce conclusions. [209684]

Derek Twigg: We have received correspondence about this issue from the working group considering the needs of schools with large numbers of service children. They have put forward a number of proposals, some of which we have already been able to make progress on and we will be responding to them in full in the near future.

League Tables

13. **Mr. Ben Chapman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on value added league tables of school performance. [209686]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Value added measures are based on the progress made by students at all levels of attainment, and take account of student intakes. We have now introduced a KS2-GCSE VA measure, alongside the existing measures already published, showing progress made for the whole of a student's secondary phase of education. We are developing a more sophisticated methodology which takes account of factors such as gender, ethnicity, socio-economic factors and mobility for use in future years' tables.

Funding

14. **Gregory Barker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what representations she has received regarding funding shortfalls for schools in East Sussex for 2005–06. [209687]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The only representation from East Sussex Council was to discuss additional funding via the Transitional Support Grant. They will receive £1.6 million through this grant in 2005–06. The provisional funding settlement announced is a good one as East Sussex's Schools Formula Spending Share will rise by 5.5 per cent. per pupil giving headroom and flexibility for the LEA to target resources at schools with particular pressures.

17. **Mr. Luff:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make it her policy to reduce variations in per pupil funding for shire county local education authorities. [209690]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: We will shortly be consulting on the education funding proposals set out in the Five Year Strategy for Children and Learners. But the proposals are not about an arbitrary change in variations in per pupil funding between various authorities. LEAs will continue to be funded under the formula on the basis of relative need. Our top priority in making any funding changes from 2006–07 is continued stability and predictability for schools in their funding.

Construction Skills Training

15. **Ms Walley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what funding is available for construction skills training. [209688]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Government currently provides £325 million to fund construction skills training via the Learning and Skills Council. This is in addition to the £97 million contributed by the industry through the Construction Industry Training Board levy.

Student Debt

16. **Dr. Cable:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the current level of student debt. [209689]

Dr. Howells: Figures provided by the Student Loans Company show the total amount outstanding in respect of publicly-owned student loan debt in the United Kingdom, at the end of financial year 2003–04, was £13,364 million. This is a provisional figure, which includes loans not yet due for repayment.

Class Sizes

18. **Mr. Gill:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the impact of smaller class sizes on primary school pupils. [209691]

Derek Twigg: Research carried out for the Department by the University of London's Institute of Education showed that there was a significant beneficial effect of class size on children's educational progress in Reception for both literacy and maths. However, the research found that there was no evidence that children made more progress in maths, English or science in smaller classes at Key Stage 2.

Vocational Education

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the financial co-operation between local education authorities and the Learning and Skills Council in implementing the Government's 14–19 strategy for vocational education; and if she will make a statement. [209692]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The joint 16–19 Capital Fund announced in the Department's five year strategy will be available for cross-sector projects, including vocational provision. The forthcoming 14–19 White Paper will consider how financial co-operation between LEAs and the LSC can be further developed to help support implementation of the 14–19 strategy.

College/School Funding Gap

Mr. Hunter: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the salary gap between teachers in the further education sector and those in the schools sector. [208185]

Dr. Howells: Success for All, the strategy for reforming further education and training, makes clear that the Government's approach to pay is to enable local flexibility to meet local needs and to encourage a clear link between pay and individual performance. General FE colleges and sixth form colleges are autonomous institutions and as such negotiate their own pay and conditions of service with staff and their unions without Government involvement.

We have made significant investments in funding for colleges. Total funding is set to rise by over £1 billion in 2005–06 when compared with 2002–03.

The latest available data suggests that salaries of teachers in further education are lower on average than those of teachers in schools.

Education Maintenance Allowance

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many students in Hendon are in receipt of education maintenance allowance; and if she will make a statement. [207940]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Information on the number of young people who have applied, enrolled and been paid EMA is available at local authority level. By the end of December 2004, 837 young people in the Barnet local education authority area were enrolled for EMA by their school or college, with 823 having received an EMA payment.

External Suppliers

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how many tenders were let by her Department to external suppliers in the financial year 2004–05; and what the value was; [209098]

(2) how many tenders, and to what value, were let by her Department to external suppliers in the financial year 2003–04. [209099]

Derek Twigg: This information could be supplied only at disproportionate cost.

Faith-based Schools

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many applications from faith-based groups to open new state-funded schools have been *(a)* received and *(b)* granted since the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. [209875]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Promoters of faith-based schools have published proposals to establish 64 new LEA maintained schools with a religious character since the School Standards and Framework Act came into force in 1999. Of these 57 have been approved by the local School Organisation Committee or Schools Adjudicator and two have not yet been decided.

These figures include community schools that have closed and re-opened as a new school with a religious character. They exclude new schools established as a result of an amalgamation where at least one of the schools was an existing faith school.

To date five academies established since 1998 have applied for designation as schools with a religious character and all have been accepted.

Higher Education

Mr. Laxton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much public funding has been spent on higher education in Derby, north in each year between 1997 and 2004. [208489]

Dr. Howells: Derby university is the only Higher Educational Institution (HEI) located within the parliamentary constituency of Derby, north hence all data in the answer relate to this institution.

Public funding for Derby university from the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) is shown in the first table.

Recurrent funding for University of Derby[1, 2]

£000

		Of which:		
	Recurrent funds for teaching and research	*Teaching*	*Research*	*Funds for rewarding and developing staff*[3]
1997–98	17,408	17,067	341	—
1998–99	20,716	20,295	422	—
1999–00	22,064	21,612	452	—
2000–01	23,140	22,683	457	—
2001–02	24,066	23,087	452	528
2002–03	24,690	23,667	234	789
2003–04	27,242	25,734	317	1,191
2004–05	30,082	29,766	315	—

[1] HEFCE is not able to provide data on funding allocated in respect of students ordinarily resident in Derby North.

[2] Funding figures show HEFCE recurrent grant for teaching and research only. They exclude other HEFCE grants such as for capital and other special initiatives. They also exclude funding from other public sources, such as the NHS, TTA, LSC, research councils etc.

[3] Funding for rewarding and developing staff was first allocated for 2001–02 and transferred into teaching grant in 2004–05.

Source:
HEFCE

Data on hardship and other bursaries allocated to Derby university are shown in the second table.

Hardship/access to learning fund allocations, fee waivers and opportunity bursaries allocations—University of Derby 1997–98 to 2004–05

	Hardship fund/ access to learning fund allocations	*Fee waivers*	*Opportunity bursaries allocations*
1997–98	134,363	n/a	n/a
1998–99	501,055	n/a	n/a
1999–00	759,046	n/a	n/a
2000–01	983,402	33,085	n/a
2001–02	[1,2]822,812	44,219	85,000
2002–03	[1,2]848,665	43,438	143,000
2003–04	[2]817,981	62,711	201,500
2004–05	[2]917,730	[3]30,322	[4]112,500

n/a = Not applicable

[1] For hardship/access to learning funds, initial allocations are shown for 2001–2 and 2002-03. The allocations were later adjusted—usually upwards by up to 10 per cent.–because in these years the guidance was produced prior to the data—necessary to model final allocations—could be made available.

[2] From 2003–04 onwards actual allocations are shown as due to developments in the timetable for gathering data this information was available much earlier. Allocations could also be affected by the redistribution of unspent funding recovered from under spending institutions later in the financial year.

[3] From 2004–05 the fee waiver budget was incorporated into new statutory support package for part time students. Some funding was retained—up to £3 million nationally—for transitional protection for eligible continuing students who received a fee waiver in 2003–04 but whose fees were not entirely met by the new package.

[4] There were no opportunity bursaries for new students in 2004–05 as the bursaries were replaced by the HE grant from 2004–05. This figure relates to continuing bursary instalments only.

Data on public expenditure paid to students at Derby university by the Student Loans Company (SLC) in respect of grants, income-contingent loan cash outlay, and tuition fees for academic years 1999/00 to 2004/05 (provisional) are shown in the third table.

Data are not available at the level requested prior to academic year 1999/00.

SLC expenditure on grants1, 2, income-contingent loan cash outlay2, and tuition fees3 paid to students studying at Derby university 4 academic years 1999/2000 to 2004/055

Academic Year	SLC Expenditure (£ million)
1999/00	19.2
2000/01	25.0
2001/02	26.5
2002/03	28.0
2003/04	31.0
2004/05	32.2

[1] Up to and including academic year 2003/04 data on grant expenditure for student support scheme relates to additional allowances/grants to eligible students for extra help depending on their circumstances, e.g. students with disabilities, students with dependents, single parent students, those incurring certain travel costs, and those who have recently left care. In addition, data for 2004/05 include expenditure on the higher education grant which was introduced for new students in 2004/05 to help cover the cost of participating in higher education.

[2] Students domiciled in England and Wales.

[3] Students domiciled in England, Wales and the EU.

[4] Data also includes planned expenditure.

[5] Provisional (as at 14 January 2005).

Data on public expenditure for mortgage style loans, part-time fee grants and part-time course grants are not readily available at the level requested. I will include details of these expenditures in the house library when available.

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 16 December 2004; *Official Report*, columns 1288–89W, on higher education, if she will ask the Higher Education Statistics Agency to collect and publish data on students whose highest qualification on entry is a vocational qualification; and if she will make a statement. [209838]

Dr. Howells: The Higher Education Statistics Agency already collect the entry qualifications of entrants to HE each year, as part of their individualised student record. Not all courses are separately identified but the categories of entry qualifications they use, covering both academic and vocational courses, are listed on their website at http://www.hesa.ac.uk/manuals/archive.htm. HESA publish summaries of this information in their annual reference volume "Students in Higher Education Institutions", copies of which are available from the House Library.

Industrial Training Boards

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the average time taken for employers seeking to be taken out of the scope of an industrial training board was in the last year for which figures are available. [209440]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The last time employers were taken out of the scope of an industrial training board was in 1992, when the Construction Board Order was amended. It is not possible in the time available to obtain the information requested but I will write to the hon. Member as soon I have it.

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what discussions *(a)* she and *(b)* her officials have held since January 2004 with the British Exhibition Contractors Association on the requirements for their members to be registered with the Construction Industry Training Board; and if she will make a statement. [209441]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: I have had no discussions with the British Exhibition Contractors Association. My officials met with a representative of the association in October 2004 to discuss the position of his members in relation to the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB). It was agreed that the association would set out for me the arguments for removing exhibition contracting from the scope of the CITB. I have not yet received any proposal from them.

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when the requirement for exhibition contractors to be registered with the Construction Industry Training Board was last reviewed; and if she will make a statement. [209442]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The requirement would only be reviewed at the request of either the employers concerned or the Construction Industry Training

Board. I have received no such request but am expecting one shortly from the British Exhibition Contractors Association on behalf of the employers.

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many exhibition construction companies have appealed to industrial tribunals since May 1997 seeking exemption from the Industrial Training Act 1982; and what the results were. [209443]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Since May 1997 four exhibition contractors have appealed to Industrial Tribunals seeking exemption from paying levy to CITB. Of these, three were withdrawn before a hearing, and one had its appeal upheld.

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the procedure to be followed is for companies seeking exemption from the requirements of the Industrial Training Act 1982. [209444]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The procedure to be followed by companies seeking to be removed from the scope of an Industrial Training Board is as follows;

> The detailed arguments should be set out in writing to my Department, along with information on how the companies would organise and fund their training needs if they were no longer covered by the ITB.
>
> I will consult with the industry and other relevant bodies and also with Ministers in the Devolved Administrations.
>
> I will decide, taking all relevant issues into account, whether the request should be agreed and write to the applicants informing them of my decision.
>
> If I agree to the request my Department's legal advisers will draft a revised statutory instrument.
>
> The statutory instrument must be approved by Parliament before it can come into effect.

Pay TV

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many pay television subscriptions the Department had in each year since 1997; and what the cost was in each year. [207657]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: My Department receives a parliamentary broadcast package consisting of 27 channels. The package is supplied by Initial Communications and has been since 1994 at nil cost. The Sky channels that are part of the package are also supplied at nil cost. In addition, the department pays for a satellite subscription for use at our contingency site at Croydon. This arrangement has only been set up since September 2001 and the costs incurred are as follows:

	£
2003–04	4,000
2003–05	6,000

Press Officers

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many press officers are employed in the Department. [206524]

Derek Twigg: The Department for Education and Skills has 17 press officers.

Primary Schools (Watford)

Claire Ward: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the standards of numeracy and literacy in primary schools in Watford were *(a)* in 1997 and *(b)* on the latest date for which figures are available. [209685]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The proportion of 11-year-olds in Watford achieving the expected level at Key Stage 2 English rose from 68.6 per cent. in 1997 to 81.5 per cent. in 2004. For mathematics, the proportion rose 63.8 per cent. in 1997 to 77.7 per cent. in 2004.

HEALTH

Acute Hospital Beds

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many acute hospital beds are available at NHS hospitals within the Greater London area. [209408]

Dr. Ladyman: In 2003–04, there were 16,676 acute beds available in the five London strategic health authorities.

Cancer Services

Sir Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research his Department has commissioned into the frequencies with which *(a)* men and *(b)* women access primary care for cancer. [208412]

Miss Melanie Johnson: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave on 1[illegible] October 2004, *Official Report*, column 356W to my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Dudley, North (Ross Cranston).

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the commitment to spending an extra £570 million on cancer services by 2004 in the September 2000 NHS Cancer Plan was fulfilled; and how extra money relating to cancer services since the publication of that plan has been spent. [208775]

Miss Melanie Johnson: An exercise to identify how the additional £570 million announced in the national health service cancer plan was spent in 2003–04 is currently underway. Results will be published soon. However, we are confident that the £570 million figure will be met.

Dentists

Mr. Damian Green: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress his Department has made to agreeing an NHS dentistry charging system to reflect future preventative treatment patterns, as recommended in the National Audit Office report, Reforming NHS Dentistry: Ensuring Effective Management of Risks. [206721]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department has received a report on options for a future system of dental patient charges from a working group chaired by Harry Cayton, the Department's director for patients and the public. Harry Cayton's group was asked to devise a system, which was straightforward and easy to understand by patients and dentists, was easy to operate and implement and which raised the same proportion of charges revenue as now. We will be consulting on proposals for the new charging system later this year.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much the Department spent on lawyers in each year since 1997; broken down by *(a)* number of actions, *(b)* number of settlements, *(c)* number of court cases and *(d)* the costs of each settlement. [206454]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is not available in the format requested. Such information as is available is in the table. Data concerning case numbers, court cases and settlements could only be obtained by calling up individual cases and this would involve disproportionate cost.

The information provided refers only to amounts spent on litigation, not advisory work.

	Amount (£)
1997–98	1,352,385.50
1998–99	1,986,723.60
1999–2000	3,404,369.20
2000–01	2,602,100.40
2001–02	2,058,405.07
2002–03	1,623,688.92
2003–04	2,396,356.84

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the running costs of the Department were in each year since 1997, broken down by *(a)* electricity, *(b)* water, *(c)* gas, *(d)* telephones, *(e)* mobile telephones and *(f)* televisions. [206677]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information shown on the various elements of the Department's running costs are those available from its accounting system.

The costs for the principal buildings on the Department's London estate are as follows:

	Cost (£)
Electricity	
1997–98	615,007
1998–99	641,783
1999–2000	634,859
2000–01	545,079
2001–02	579,102
2002–03	551,938
2003–04	572,782
Gas	
1997–98	28,518
1998–99	45,880
1999–2000	58,134
2000–01	70,504
2001–02	76,097
2002–03	86,366
2003–04	86,366
Water and sewerage	
1997–98	36,396
1998–99	33,641
1999–2000	32,607
2000–01	32,224
2001–02	29,009
2002–03	34,684
2003–04	29,372

Note:

The cost of water is not maintained separately.

Telephones

The running costs for telephones are not available as they cannot be separated out from other telecommunications data costs.

Mobile telephones

	Cost (£)
2001–02	265,000
2002–03	275,000
2003–04	300,000

Note:

The cost of mobile phones is not available prior to 2001.

Television

The annual cost is£ 27,739.40 (inclusive of value added tax).

Diabetes

Dr. Evan Harris: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress had been made in each strategic health authority towards the target for 80 per cent. of diabetics to be offered retinopathy screening by 2006 *(a)* at Q4 of 2003–04 and *(b)* at the last quarter for which figures are available. [208402]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested has been placed in the Library.

Directors of Infection Prevention and Control

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when the Department plans to publish guidance on the role of Directors of Infection Prevention and Control. [208082]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Guidance on competencies for directors of infection prevention and control was distributed in May 2004 and is available on the Department's website at http://www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/LettersAndCirculars/DearColleagueLetters/DearColleagueLettersArticle/fs/en?CONTENT_ID=4083982&chk=Z4VWx7. Copies have been placed in the Library.

Doctor Vacancies

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many vacancies there are for doctors in NHS hospitals within the Greater London area. [209411]

Dr. Ladyman: The information requested is collected by strategic health authority (SHA) area. Data for the London SHAs are shown in the table.

Vacancies by London SHA area[1]*, medical and dental staff (excluding training grades)—three month vacancy numbers*[2] *as at 31 March 2004*

		Number
	England	1,666
	of which:	
	London GOR	315
Q04	North West London SHA	92
Q05	North Central London SHA	30
Q06	North East London SHA	77
Q07	South East London SHA	104
Q08	South West London SHA	12

[1] SHA figures are based on trusts and do not necessarily reflect the geographical provision of healthcare.

[2] Three month vacancies are vacancies as at 31 March 2004 which trusts are actively trying to fill, which had lasted for three months or more (whole time equivalents).

Source:

Department of Health vacancies survey 2004

Flu/Pneumonia Vaccines

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if he will list, by primary care trust, how many people had received the *(a)* flu and *(b)* pneumonia vaccine by 30 November; [202942]

(2) what percentage of eligible people in each primary care trust had received the *(a)* influenza and *(b)* pneumonia vaccine by 30 November. [203878]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Information has been placed in the Library, showing:

> The number of eligible people—those 65 year and over and those under 65 years in a medical risk group—who received flu immunisation for which data is available as at the end of November 2004, by primary care trust.
>
> The number of people 80 years and over, who were immunised during the first year of the pneumococcal immunisation programme—from 20 Aug 2003 to 31 March 2004—by primary care trust.

Health Care-associated Infection

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when statistics will be available on *(a)* clostridium difficile infections, *(b)* vancomycin resistant enterococci and *(c)* surgical site infections. [208091]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Information on "Clostridium difidle" disease, vancomycin resistant enterococci and surgical site infections is already available from the Health Protection Agency's voluntary reporting scheme and published routinely on their website. Data from the mandatory surveillance system is likely to be available later this year.

Heroin Addiction

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the level of heroin addiction was in the Greater London area for the latest period for which figures are available. [210313]

Dr. Ladyman: This information is not collected centrally.

Mobile Phones

Glenda Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will institute a review into the possible health implications of mobile telephones in the light of the report by the National Radiological Protection Board. [208968]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The National Radiological Protection Board (NRPB) provides statutory advice on risks from exposure to radiation and electromagnetic fields. Its recent publication, "Mobile Phones and Health 2004"—Documents of the NRPB, Vol. 15, No. 5, 2004—has reviewed the possible health implications of mobile phones and made a number of recommendations. The report is available on the NRPB website at www.nrpb.org and is available in the Library. The Government are currently considering the detailed recommendations.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what advice he is giving to those who have *(a)* a pacemaker and *(b)* a digital hearing aid on the advisability of using a mobile phone on a regular basis; and if he will make a statement. [209162]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 18 January 2005]:* The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency's (MHRA) predecessor, the Medical Devices Agency (MDA), issued guidance to clinicians about possible interference effects to pacemakers from digital mobile telephones in February 1996 in Pacemaker Technical Note PTN 61. Clinicians were asked to advise patients to ensure that a minimum separation distance of 15 centimetres was maintained between the implanted pacemaker and a mobile telephone and that the mobile telephone should be used with the ear furthest away from the pacemaker.

Advice given to users is that they should check the operation of the mobile telephone with their hearing aid. New hearing aids should quote the measured input related interference level: the lower the figure, the better the immunity from mobile telephone interference.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research his Department has *(a)* supported and *(b)* commissioned on the impact of mobile phones on those who have a pacemaker. [209163]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 18 January 2005]:* The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) and its predecessor the Medical Devices Agency (MDA) have provided input and advice to research activities undertaken by pacemaker manufacturers, through representation at European and International pacemaker safety standards committees.

The MDA, with the co-operation of St. Georges hospital, Tooting, commissioned a small study to assess the impact of digital mobile telephones on implanted pacemakers, to confirm the appropriateness of advice issued to health service clinicians in Pacemaker Technical Note PTN61—February 1996.

MRI Scanners/Scans

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which hospitals have MRI scanners; and if he will make a statement. [207896]

Miss Melanie Johnson: There are approximately 230 magnetic resonance imaging scanners installed in national health service hospitals in England. Information listing the hospitals has been placed in the Library.

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many MRI scanners there are available and how many hours are designated for NHS neurological use; [208845]

(2) whether additional MRI scans are to be purchased from Alliance Medical to reduce waiting times for people with neurological conditions. [208852]

Miss Melanie Johnson: There are approximately 230 static magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scanners installed within the national health service. There are also 12 mobile MRI scanners operating through centrally funded procurement. It is for strategic health authorities and trusts locally to decide how to use this additional capacity to meet the needs of their local population.

National MRI mobile scanning provided by Alliance Medical is adding over 15 per cent. more capacity to the NHS—up to 131,000 additional scans by 12 mobile units moving from location to location will be available to doctors to help them give patients a diagnosis including patients with neurological conditions.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the most recent figures are for waiting times for MRI scans, broken down by *(a)* hospital trust and *(b)* primary care trust. [208520]

Miss Melanie Johnson: This information is not held centrally.

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether additional MRI scans to be purchased through the private system are reported on by *(a)* UK staff and *(b)* staff overseas. [208853]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The additional magnetic resonance imaging scans procured from the independent sector are being reported on by radiologists who are on the register of the General Medical Council and the appropriate specialist register for the Royal College of Radiologists, as is the case within the national health service. This is the case whether or not these qualified radiologists are performing their duties from within the United Kingdom or overseas.

MRSA

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research his Department has commissioned into the efficacy of essential oils in killing MRSA bacteria. [208661]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 17 January 2005]:* None but the Department is aware of research in this area.

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what his strategy is for tackling the spread of MRSA outside hospital settings; and what funds his Department has set aside to tackle MRSA. [208809]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 17 January 2005]:* The Government's programme to prevent and control methicillin resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) and other healthcare associated infections is outlined in "Winning Ways—Working together to reduce healthcare associated infection in England and Towards cleaner hospitals and lower rates of infection". This recognises that infections occur in a variety of healthcare settings and refers to relevant guidance such as the National Institute for Clinical Excellence's "Infection Control—Prevention of healthcare associated infection in primary and community care".

Allocation of resources is a local decision, but we are increasing investment in the national health service by around 7.2 per cent., a year in real terms in the period from 2003–04 to 2007–08.

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what proposals are in place to combat the spread of MRSA in the London borough of Havering with particular regard to the New Oldchurch Hospital. [209438]

Dr. Ladyman: The spread of methicillin resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) can be controlled by good infection control practice and the national programme to tackle such infections is outlined in "Winning Ways" and "Towards Cleaner Hospitals". The national health service has a target of halving rates of MRSA by 2008.

The new Oldchurch Hospital, which is currently under construction, has 20 per cent. of its beds in single rooms. This will allow for the effective isolation of patients with infections.

The trust's director of nursing has started negotiations with the private finance initiative company over cleaning schedules to ensure that these meet "Towards Cleaner Hospitals" requirements and has gained assurances that the housekeeping and domestic staff will be accountable to ward sisters and matrons.

Multiple Sclerosis

Mr. Letwin: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the timetable for introducing Aimspro as a licensed drug for multiple sclerosis sufferers. [205412]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Aimspro is a product being developed by Daval International, a United Kingdom company, for a number of indications, including multiple sclerosis. Aimspro is still at an early stage of development and the company is conducting or planning to conduct a number of trials in these indications. Further information on the safety, quality and efficacy of Aimspro will be required for this product to progress to license application. Only very limited clinical data are currently available on Aimspro. Timing in relation to the granting of any product licence depends on how long it takes the company to complete the relevant development work, prepare the regulatory submission and obtain regulatory approval.

No Secrets Guidance

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the implementation of No Secrets guidance by local authorities. [202917]

Dr. Ladyman: The Department commissioned the Centre for Policy on Ageing in 2002 to analyse implementation of the Department's "No Secrets' guidance, which provides the basis for local multi agency codes of practice to prevent and tackle the abuse of vulnerable adults. The analysis indicated that local councils have met the requirements required by "No Secrets' and that considerable progress has been made towards improving co-ordination between agencies when dealing with adult abuse cases.

Out-of-hours Services

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what the reasons were for the decision of the North Yorkshire Emergency Doctors co-operative to go into administration last month; and what action the Government is taking to ensure that the quality of out-of-hours care in North Yorkshire is not jeopardised by this decision; [208713]

(2) what new funding is being made available so that the out-of-hours service in North Yorkshire can continue to function effectively; [208714]

(3) what assessment he has made of possible sources of new funding for out-of-hours services in North Yorkshire; and what funding he expects to come from *(a)* primary care trusts, *(b)* the Government and *(c)* other sources. [208715]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Department has been in close contact with the local strategic health authority and primary care trusts (PCTs) who are leading on ensuring the continuity of out-of-hours services in North Yorkshire, and that the services meet the national quality requirements.

The Department is supporting out-of-hours services through greatly increased funding which has been allocated directly to the PCTs who commission out-of-hours services.

Some £316 million is available this year to help fund PCT provision of out-of-hours services. In addition, PCTs are also using their unified budgets—increased by 12.7 billion from £45 billion in 2003–04 to £53.9 billion in 2005–06—to establish integrated networks of urgent care provision.

Ovarian Cancer

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what progress he has made in developing referral guidelines for ovarian cancer; [208361]

(2) what progress cancer networks have made with support for sufferers of ovarian cancer. [208362]

Miss Melanie Johnson: In 1999, the Department published "Improving outcomes guidance for gynaecological cancers". One of the major outcomes of this guidance was the introduction of specialist teams to treat gynaecological cancers, including ovarian cancer.

We have also instituted a two-week wait policy for all urgent cancer referrals. Latest figures show that 99.5 per cent. of suspected gynaecological cancer referrals were seen within the two week period.

The Department issued general practitioner cancer referral guidelines in 2000 to assist GPs in determining those patients who need to be referred urgently to see a specialist within two weeks, those patients that can be referred for a routine appointment and those who can be safely watched at a primary care level. The guidelines include a section on gynaecological cancers.

The referral guidelines are currently being reviewed by the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE). Updated guidelines are due to be published in March 2005.

Paddington Basin Health Campus

Mr. Wilkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health to what penalty clauses his Department is contractually liable for commercial enterprises relating to the progress of work on the Paddington Basin Health Campus project. [209320]

Dr. Ladyman: The Department has no contractual commitments to commercial enterprises relating to progress of work on the Paddington Health Campus project.

Mr. Wilkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what expenditure his Department has incurred to date on the Paddington Health Campus Project; and how much of that expenditure has been in consultancy fees. [209321]

Dr. Ladyman: The Department has not incurred any consultancy fees on the Paddington Health Campus project. Staff working on the project have done so as part of their normal duties and no records are kept of the total time or cost.

Mr. Wilkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what his estimate is of the date when the Paddington Basin Health Campus will become fully operational. [209356]

Dr. Ladyman: The outline business case for the Paddington Health Campus estimates that the new facilities will be fully operational from June 2013.

Mr. Wilkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he expects his Department to receive planning permission from Westminster borough council to proceed with the Paddington Health Campus project. [209358]

Dr. Ladyman: Westminster city council issued a draft planning brief for the Paddington Health Campus site in December 2004. A masterplan will be submitted to the council in February by the Royal Brompton and Harefield and St. Mary's national health service trusts in response to the planning brief which is due to be considered by the council at a meeting in March. A planning application will follow the committee's consideration of the masterplan.

Mr. Wilkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS personnel have been involved in working *(a)* full-time and *(b)* part-time on the Paddington Basin Health Campus project in each year since 1997; how many of these were working in (i) his Department, (ii) health authorities and (iii) trust hospitals; and what his estimate is of the figures in each of the next eight years. [209360]

Dr. Ladyman: The following table shows the head count of personnel that have worked on, and been charged to, the Paddington Health Campus project in each of the six years from 1999–2000. In 1999, a designated team was set up to support the West London Partnership Forum, hosted by the former Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster health authority (KCWHA). The Paddington Health Campus project team was set up in 2000, hosted by St. Mary's national health service trust. There was no designated project team before 1999 and statement of case work was resourced by former HA and regional HA personnel as part of their routine strategic function. Records of personnel resources working on the project are not available prior to 1999. There have been no full time, nor regular part time, staff working on Paddington Health Campus at either the Department or the North West London strategic health authority.

Personnel working on Paddington health campus

		Headcount whole time	Headcount part time	Total headcount
Pre 2000	Estimated[1]	3	0	3
2000–01	Actual	5	0	5
2001–02	Actual	6	1	7
2002–03	Actual	14	9	23
2003–04	Actual	23	13	36
2004–05	Projected to March 2005	15	13	28

[1] KCW HA/West London Partnership Forum.

Mr. Wilkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what *(a)* capital and *(b)* revenue financial contributions have been requested by his Department of the Royal Brompton and Harefield NHS hospital trust towards the Paddington Basin Health Campus project in the interim period before the campus becomes operational; and whether these contributions have been approved by the Board of the Royal Brompton and Harefield NHS hospital trust. [209361]

Dr. Ladyman: The outline business case for the Paddington Health Campus identifies a capital contribution of £1 million per annum for four years and revenue support of £800,000 per annum for six years during the construction phase of the project from the Royal Brompton and Harefield NHS trusts. The resolution in support of the outline business case agreed by the trust board in December 2004 stated that capital and revenue contributions will be required from the trust during the transitional period. The Department has not requested or required either trust to make these contributions.

Mr. Wilkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what his latest estimate is of the funds to be realised for his Department from land sales on the site of *(a)* Harefield hospital and *(b)* the Royal Brompton hospital; and what proportion of the total estimated final cost of the Paddington Basin Health Campus they constitute. [209362]

Dr. Ladyman: There is no plan within the outline business case for the Paddington Health Campus to dispose of the Harefield hospital site. In line with its undertaking to maintain employment in the area, the Royal Brompton and Harefield National Health Service Trust's plans for the Harefield site include the facilitation of a science park on that location following the move of the hospital's work to the campus. The estimated value of the Royal Brompton hospital site within the outline business case is £94.5 million. It is currently planned that, with the appropriate approvals, land sales from the Royal Brompton and Harefield and St. Mary's NHS Trusts will fund the cost of the proposed land acquisition and other capital commitments of the Paddington Health Campus. The construction cost of the Campus is assessed as £789 million at current prices, exclusive of value added tax and inflation. The estimated value of the Royal Brompton hospital represents 12 per cent., of the estimated construction cost of the campus.

Mr. Wilkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the consultants to whom NHS monies have been disbursed for work related to the Paddington Basin Health Campus since the beginning of the project, broken down by amount of money. [209403]

Dr. Ladyman: Table 1 shows a list of consultants and payments made for advice provided since the beginning of the Paddington Health Campus project. Table 2 summarises the total expenditure on consultants by year. From 1999, the Paddington Health Campus was the responsibility of the West London Partnership Forum, hosted by the former Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster Health Authority (KCW HA). In November 2000, responsibility for the costs of the project transferred to St. Mary's National Health Service Trust. Thousands.

Table 1: Consultants employed by Paddington Health Campus project

	£000
Legal	
Berwin Leighton Paisner[1]	735
Capsticks	4
Finance	
PricewaterhouseCoopers[1]	520
Mike Flaxman Associates[1]	419
Ernst & Young	30
Secta	131
Office for Public Management	18
P Adams Consultancy	22
Agenda	33
Sigma Hb	99
Michael Hartfield	8
IHG	13
Newchurch/JSS Pinnacle	319
Imperial College	15
Finnamore	34
Royal Hospitals	2
De Vere Healthcare	84
Design & Technical	
BDP	94
Sheppard Robson[1]	101
Durrow Management	10
Turner & Townsend	105
King Sturge/CML/HL	35
Davis Langdon[1]	493
Studio 41	332
IBS (consortium inc WSP and Tangram)	911
FM support costs	
Healthgain	10
EC Harris1	170
Decant, project planning/design:	
Love Jenkins	2
TBA Services Management	23
Hornagold & Hills	146

Table 1: Consultants employed by Paddington Health Campus project

	£000
ICT	
DQS (formerly Saba)[1]	106
HealthSystems	2
Silicon	16
Pagoda	46
Property Advice	
Derek Home	10
Insignia Richard Ellis	24
Atis Real Wetherall[1]	122
VGA (District Valuer)	6
Monatgue Evans	123
Communications	
Nexus	19
London Communications Agency[1]	12
Various writers/photography	9
Christow	144
Audit	
Deloitte & Touche	14
Parkhill Audit Agency	37
Equipment Advice	
United Medical Group (UMG)[1]	77
MTS	17
Derek Dipper Associates	3
Insurance	—
Willis[1]	8
Accommodation Advice	
Hunter and Partners	25
Planning Application Support	
GL Hearn[1]	212
Terry Farrell & Partners (consortium inc Arup, Environ & Gillespie)[1]	68
Ove Arup[1]	145
Savell Bird & Axon	80
Gordon Ingram Associates	36
SOM	1,037
TGA Consulting Services	5
Virtual Artwork	14
City of Westminster	6
Museum of London Archaeology Service	6
Grand Total to 31 December 2004	7,347

[1] Consultants currently contracted to PHC. Thousands

Table 2: Paddington Health Campus adviser costs by year

			£000
West London Partnership Forum (WLPF)—KCW HA	WLPF	October 2000	1,479
PHC Project Team—St. Mary's NHS Trust	November 2000	March 2001	231
PHC Project Team—St Mary's NHS Trust	April 2001	March 2002	520
PHC Project Team—St. Mary's NHS Trust	April 2002	March 2003	947
PHC Project Team—St. Mary's NHS Trust	April 2003	March 2004	2,991
Previous years' total	—	—	6,168
PHC Project Team (St Mary's NHS Trust)[1]	April 2004	December 2004	1,179
Total Adviser costs to 31 December 2004	—	—	7,347

[1] Includes accruals for estimated charges to December 2004.

Prostate Cancer

Sir Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the prostate cancer risk management programme. [208406]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The prostate cancer risk management programme (PCRMP) was established to ensure that men considering a prostate specific antigen (PSA) test for prostate cancer are given accurate, balanced information concerning the benefits, limitations and risks associated with having the test.

The Cancer Research UK primary care education research group is now in the process of evaluating the use of the packs. This includes a national survey of 400 general practitioners, a population survey of 900 men aged 40 to 75 and a series of in-depth focus groups and interviews. The evaluation is being jointly funded by the Department and Cancer Research UK.

In addition to this evaluation, the PCRMP is supported and advised by a multi-disciplinary scientific reference group.

Sir Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research his Department is funding to develop a more reliable diagnostic test for prostate cancer. [208407]

Miss Melanie Johnson: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave on 14 October 2004, *Official Report*, column 356W to my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Dudley, North, (Ross Cranston).

Sir Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment his Department has made of the reliability of do-it-yourself PSA testing kits; and what plans he has to regulate their public sale. [208410]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Do-it-yourself prostate specific antigen (PSA) test kits are in-vitro diagnostic (IVD) medical devices and are regulated throughout Europe by the European IVD Medical Devices Directive 98/79/EC. PSA test kits can be sold to the public if they meet the essential requirements for safety, quality and performance of the Directive and they bear the CE marking.

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) monitors the safety of these devices via its vigilance reporting system, which is a statutory requirement on device manufacturers. In addition, the MHRA operates a voluntary reporting system for both professional device users and the general public.

Special Advisers

Mr. George Osborne: : To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many special advisers there are in the Department, broken down by civil service pay-grade. [206506]

Ms Rosie Winterton: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given on 21 December 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1640–41W by my hon. Friend, the Minister for the Cabinet Office.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Health on how many occasions between 31 March 2002 and 31 March 2003 his special advisers travelled abroad in an official capacity; what places were visited; and how much each visit cost. [207189]

Ms Rosie Winterton: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to him and the hon. Member for West Chelmsford (Mr. Burns) on 8 September 2003, *Official Report*, column 270W.

St. George's Hospital, Tooting

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the funding that has been allocated to St. George's Hospital, Tooting for the next 12 months. [209248]

Dr. Ladyman: The Department does not make revenue allocations to national health service trusts. Revenue allocations are made to primary care trusts, who are responsible for commissioning services from NHS trusts, such as those provided by St. George's Healthcare NHS Trust, to meet the needs of their local populations.

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many ward beds are available at St. George's Hospital, Tooting. [209409]

Dr. Ladyman: Data are only available for national health service trusts and not individual hospitals. In 2003–04, there were 1,000 ward beds available in St. George's Hospital NHS Trust.

Stolen Property

Mr. George Osborne: : To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the property belonging to his Department that has *(a)* been stolen and *(b)* been reported lost in each year since 1997, broken down by type of article. [206361]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department takes the protection of its property very seriously and guidance for protecting property and procedures are kept under constant review. We do not record separate figures for losses and thefts. The following table shows reported departmental combined losses and thefts for the period April 1997 to November 2004.

Financial year	*Laptops lost/ stolen*	*Mobile phones lost/stolen*	*Other information technology equipment/ peripherals*
1997–98	23	19	Not available
1998–99	19	19	Not available
1999–2000	18	26	22
2000–01	23	43	10
2001–02	35	37	6
2002–03	26	37	5
2003–04	34	29	3
Total	178	210	46

Waiting Times

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients in the *(a)* Kingston and Surbiton constituency and *(b)* borough of Kingston waited for more than six months for foot and ankle surgery under a podiatric surgeon in (i) 2003 and (ii) 2004; and if he will make a statement. [209328]

Dr. Ladyman: Information is collected by national health service organisation rather than on a constituency or borough basis. Data for Kingston Primary Care Trust (PCT) and Kingston Hospital National Health Service Trust are shown in the table.

Waiting list and booked cases: count of finished in-year admissions—distribution of time waited for foot and ankle surgery for Kingston PCT and Kingston Hospital. NHS hospitals in England 2002–03 to 2003–04

	Kingston PCT 5A5 and Kingston Hospitals RAX	
Time waited	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
Under 3 months	85	104
3 to under 6 months	42	67
6 months and over	139	80
Total admissions	270	257
Mean days	237.9	160.6
Median days	198	114

Notes:

1. Code used OPCS 4R

Primary codes:

W03, W04, W15, W59, W79, X10, X11, X12, X24, X25, X27, T523, T524, T542, T594, T604, W065, W205, X022, X023, X028, XO29T558, T559, T798, T799, T808, T809, W068, W069, W788, W789, X038, X039T53, T57, T62, T64, T65, T67, T68, T69, T70, T71, T72, T74, T76, T77,T81, T83, T96, W05, W07, W08, W09, W10, W11, W12, W13, W14, W16, W17, W18, W19, W20, W21 W22, W23, W24, W25, W26, W27, W28, W30, W31, W32, W33, W35, W43, W44, W45, W52, W53, W54, W55, W56, W57, W58, W60, W61, W62, W63, W64, W65, W66, W67, W68, W69, W71, W72, W73, W74, W75, W76, W77, W81,W83,W84,W86,W90,W91 ,W92.

2. Secondary codes:

Z59, Z79, Z80, Z86Z581, Z586, Z854, Z855, Z856, Z905, Z906,Z907.

3. Figures have not been adjusted for shortfalls in data, ie, the data are ungrossed.

4. Time waited statistics from hospital episode statistics (HES) are not the same as the published waiting list statistics. HES provides counts and time waited for all patients admitted to hospital within a given period whereas the published waiting list statistics count those waiting for treatment on a specific date and how long they have been on the waiting list. Also, HES calculates the time waited as the difference between the admission and decision to admit dates. Unlike published waiting list statistics, this is not adjusted for self-deferrals or periods of medical/social suspension.

5. A finished in-year admission is the first period of in-patient care under one consultant within one healthcare provider, excluding admissions beginning before 1 April at the start of the data year. Please note that admissions do not represent the number of in-patients, as a person may have more than one admission within the year.

Source:

HES, Department of Health.